The *Martyrdom of Mar Grigor Piran-Gušnasp* and the *Martyrdom of Mar Yazd-panah*

Edition, Translation, and Introduction by Florence Jullien

In Collaboration with Adam H. Becker

Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation

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8

Series Editor

Adam H. Becker

Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac is a series of Syriac martyrological texts composed from the fourth century into the Islamic period. They describe the martyrdom of a diversity of Christians at the hands of Sasanian kings, bureaucrats, and priests. These documents vary from purely mythological accounts to descriptions of actual events with a clear historical basis, however distorted by the hagiographer's hand.

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PREFACE

The two texts presented in this volume concern Persian aristocrats put to death under Khusrō I (531–579 CE), whose reign was one of the most distinguished of the Sasanian dynasty. The Sasanians ruled over what is now Iran and Iraq from the third through the seventh centuries. The heroes of these two accounts, Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp, who is described as a chief general of the Sasanian army, and Yazd-panāh, a Sasanian high dignitary and judge, were both Zoroastrians who converted to Christianity. The *Martyrdom of Grigor* seems to be the first work in what seems to be a narrative cycle: the story of the *Martyrdom of Yazd-panāh*, by the same hand, is directly related to it, as is the account of the confessor, the upperclass ʿAwira, which appears at the end of the latter text. Furthermore, akin to these two works is the account of Yazd-bōzēd whose life is preserved in Armenian.

The *Martyrdom of Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp* and the *Martyrdom of Yazd-panāh* were likely written by a contemporary to the events described and, along with the better-known account of the famous Catholicos Mār Abbā (540–552), they are the only East Syrian hagiographies of that time extant in Syriac. They provide valuable information regarding the socio-religious and political situation of sixth-century Iran. These martyr acts are here translated into English for the first time, based on manuscripts from libraries in London and Berlin and at the Vatican. This work updates a French translation published in 2015 in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* series (Louvain, Peeters Publishers). Research on these texts was a part of the international program “Ctesiphon” (Corpus of Texts and Sources

about Iran: For a History of the Orient in the 6th century) funded by the National Research Agency of France from 2013 to 2015. The challenge of this project was to bring together new data on the reign of Khusrō I, to deepen our knowledge of the period, and to enable the analysis and comparison of sources by means of a cross-disciplinary database.

I want to thank Adam Becker, general editor of the "Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac" series at Gorgias Press, for his very helpful and valuable remarks, his careful readings and perceptive suggestions, and also Melonie Schmierer-Lee for her efficient editorial work and patience. I would like to express also my gratitude to my mother, Denise, and to Christelle whose comments improved this work. I also thank the CeRMI (Centre de recherche sur le monde iranien, UMR 8041, CNRS) and the INaLCO (Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales), Paris, for providing financial support.

Florence Jullien

ABBREVIATIONS

AMS	P. Bedjan (ed.), *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum syriace*, I–VII, Paris, Leipzig, 1890–97.
ASS	*Acta Sanctorum*, Anvers-Bruxelles, 1643–.
B	Ms. or. oct. 1257 (Berlin, *olim* Marburg).
BHG	F. Halkin (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca* (Subsidia Hagiographica 8a; Bruxelles, 1957[3]).
BHL	H. Fros (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina antiquae et mediae aetatis novum supplementum* (Subsidia Hagiographica 70; Bruxelles, 1986).
BHO	P. Peeters (ed.), *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalia* (Bruxelles, 1910, réimpr. 1954).
BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.
CSCO	P. Peeters (ed.), *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Paris-Louvain, 1903–.
L	Ms. British Library Add. 7200 (London).
PO	R. Graffin and F. Nau (eds.), *Patrologia Orientalis* (Paris, 1907–).

INTRODUCTION

The reign of Khusrō I Anōširwān (531–579 CE) represents a key chapter in the history of Sasanian Persia. Following his accession to the throne, a shift occurred in the domestic and foreign policies of the empire and the sixth century may rightly be called a century of reforms, given the magnitude of state restructuring projects.[1] The administrative system was redesigned, as testified by epigraphic, sigillographic, and numismatic data; the system of taxation and the army were reorganised; and territories were redistributed and the land register was revised, among other changes. This general reorganisation of both the economic and social spheres affected every social stratum.

Sources provide important evidence for the state's project of reorganisation in this period, which was also a time of significant development within both the dominant Zoroastrian religious culture and among Christians living within the empire.

[1] A. Gariboldi, *Il regno di Xusrav dall'anima immortale. Riforme economiche e rivolte sociali nell'Iran sasanide del VI secolo* (Milan, 2006); M. Grinaschi, "La riforma tributaria di Ḫosro I e il feudalesimo sasanide," *Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema: la Persia nel Medioevo* (Rome, 1971), 87–147; Z. Rubin, "The reforms of Khusro Anûshirwan," in A. Cameron (ed.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near-East* III (Princeton, 1995), 227–297; C. Jullien, *Husraw I^er^ – Reconstructions d'un règne. Sources et documents* (*Studia Iranica. Cahier* 53; Paris, 2015); A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Annales du Musée Guimet. Bibliothèque d'études 48; Copenhagen, 1936, 1944[2]).

Ecclesial reforms implemented under the Catholicosate of Mār Abbā (540–552) and monastic reforms promoted by Abraham of Kaškar (d. 588) attest to consolidation within the Christian community.[2] Furthermore, during Khusrō's reign, philosophical and literary culture flourished in Iran. It was, in all likelihood, at this time, for instance, that the major Zoroastrian sacred texts of the Avesta, until then transmitted orally, were written down.[3] At the same time, international relations were forged, which would have significant consequences for the transmission of knowledge, particularly Greek philosophy beyond the Byzantine realm (and such a transmission would eventually contribute to the Muslim reception of Greek thought).[4]

Institutional and cultural growth within the empire, both among the dominant Zoroastrian community and its subjects, was not without some friction. Whereas Christianity was permitted a certain de facto freedom, some restrictions were maintained. In particular, Zoroastrians of Persian origin who converted to Christianity were harassed by civil and religious authorities and attempts were made to force them to renounce their Christian affiliation. The recalcitrant were even at times executed. Syriac hagiographical and martyrological literature has perpetuated the memory of some of these figures, particularly Mār Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp, put to death in 541/542 (*BHO* 353), whose history is also preserved in an Armenian version

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[2] F. Jullien, *Histoire de Mār Abba, catholicos de l'Orient. Martyres de Mār Grigor, général en chef du roi Khusro I^er^, et de Mār Yazd-panāh, juge et gouverneur* (CSCO 658–659, Scriptores Syri 254–255; Louvain, 2015); F. Jullien, *Le monachisme en Perse. La réforme d'Abraham le Grand, père des moines de l'Orient* (CSCO 622, Subsidia 121; Louvain, 2008).

[3] Philippe Gignoux thinks that "Mazdaean" would be a more accurate term (personal communication). On the Pahlavi translation of the Avesta probably written down in the late Sasanian period, see Cantera, *Studien zur Pahlavi-Übersetzung der Avesta* (Iranica 7; Wiesbaden, 2004).

[4] M. Tardieu, "Ṣābiens coraniques et 'Ṣābiens' de Ḥarrān," *Journal Asiatique* 274 (1986), 1–44; Id., "Chosroès," in R. Goulet (dir.), *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques* II (Paris, 1994), 309–18.

(*BHO* 354), and Mār Yazd-panāh, martyred in 544/545 (*BHO* 431). These Syriac texts offer remarkable information concerning the Sasanian Empire in the sixth century. Along with the *History of the Catholicos Mār* Abbā, they are the only East Syrian martyrological texts known from this period, hence their importance and interest to the historian.

MANUSCRIPTS AND EDITIONS

These two texts are extant in two manuscripts, while a third manuscript that survived until the early twentieth century is now lost.

– Ms. Diyarbakır 96 (D), now lost.[5] It has been variously dated to the seventh/eighth century or the eleventh/twelfth century,[6] the latter of which is apparently more likely.

– Ms. or. oct. 1257 (Berlin, *olim* Marburg) (B), foll. 15^{r}–43^{v} (Grigor) and foll. 43^{v}–56^{r} (Yazd-panāh). This is probably a copy of Diyarbakır 96.[7] It is currently at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, where it was deposited in 1915.[8] The

[5] The *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* and the *Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh* are in the thirty-third and thirty-fourth position respectively.

[6] A. Scher, "Notice sur les manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés à l'archevêché chaldéen de Diarbékir," *Journal Asiatique* 10, X^{e} série (1907), 401; J.-M. Vosté, "Notes sur les manuscrits syriaques de Diarbekir et autres localités d'Orient," *Le Muséon* 50 (1937): 349.

[7] F. Briquel Chatonnet, "Recherches sur la tradition textuelle et manuscrite de la lettre de Siméon de Bet Arsham," in J. Beaucamp, *et alii* (eds.), *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie aux V^{e} et VI^{e} siècles. Regards croisés sur les sources* (Centre de recherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 32. Le massacre de Najrân, II. Politique et religion en Arabie au VI^{e} siècle; Paris, 2010), 128–29. Ms. Or. Oct. 1257 is the second of two volumes, 1256–57.

[8] J. Assfalg, *Syrische Handschriften: Syrische, karshunische, christlich-palästinische, neu-syrische und mandäische Handschriften* (Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Bd. V; Wiesbaden, 1963), 53–59 (#27).

colophon specifies that the copy was made in Mosul on 1 Ḥaziran 1869.
– Ms. British Library, Add. 7200 (London) (L), foll. 67^{v}–73^{r} (Yazd-panāh) and foll. 73^{r}–84^{v} (Grigor). Sebastian Brock dates this East Syrian manuscript to the twelfth or thirteenth century.[9]

In 1880, based on a reading of the L manuscript, Georg Hoffmann published a summary and a few brief extracts of the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* and the *Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh*, translated into German.[10] In 1895, Paul Bedjan published a second edition of his previously published *History of Mār Yahbalaha, Patriarch, and of Rabban Ṣaumā*,[11] this time including four accounts of martyrs under the reign of Khusrō I, among them the *Martyrdoms of Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp and Mār Yazd-panāh*. No work was done on the text until a critical *editio princeps* of the Syriac texts was published with a French translation in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (CSCO) in 2015.[12] This edition includes the *History of Mār Abbā, Catholicos of the Orient*, a text also in Bedjan's edition. With the exception of the introductory discussion in the CSCO edition and one recent article, these two texts have not received much scholarly attention.[13] When they do appear in the secondary literature they enjoy only passing or brief mention.[14]

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[9] S.P. Brock, *The History of the Holy Mar Maʿin, with a Guide to the Persian Martyr Acts* (Persian Martyrs Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation 1; Piscataway, 2008), 87.

[10] G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Märtyrer* (Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 7/3; Leipzig, 1880), 78–86 (Grigor); 87–91 (Yazd-panāh).

[11] P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha, de trois autres patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques, nestoriens* (Leipzig, 1895; reprinted Piscataway, NJ, 2007).

[12] F. Jullien, *Histoire de Mār Abba. Martyres de Mār Grigor et de Mār Yazd-panāh.*

[13] A.H. Becker, "Martyrdom, Religious Difference, 'Fear' as a Category of Piety in the Sasanian Empire. The Case of the Martyrdom of Gregory

AUTHOR AND DATES

The following is what we can deduce from the two martyrdoms about the social and religious position of their anonymous author. He was a Christian from the Sasanian Empire with a nuanced knowledge of both Christianity within the empire and the dominant Zoroastrian religious culture. The *Martyrdom of Grigor* provides details concerning the construction of churches and monasteries (§ 1, § 2) as well as about the number of Christians who come to venerate the remains of the martyr, although the "tens of thousands" (lit. "thousands and myriads") described as visiting the martyr's shrine is likely hyperbole, intended to capture his audience's attention (§ 28). The author presents himself as the custodian of tradition, and particularly of the religious memory of his co-religionists in the Sasanian Empire, describing their situation fifty years earlier, under the reign of Pērōz and his successors at the end of the fifth century (§ 1). The author also demonstrates a knowledge of the political situation of the Church, as is shown by his distinctly naming the bishops persecuted by the Persian authorities (§ 21).

The author may have known the protagonist and perhaps even belonged to the same social circle: he refers to Grigor's clan, the great House of Mihrān (§ 3), and to his cousin (§ 13; §§ 19–20).[15] Moreover, he is knowledgeable about Zoroastrian

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and the Martyrdom of Yazdpaneh," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2/2 (2009), 300–36.

[14] E.g., R. Payne, *A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 56; Oakland, 2015), 51–52, 193.

[15] The Persian martyr acts of the sixth century reveal a strong concern for contemporary circumstances in contrast to many others which seem rather to be primarily fiction: P. Devos, "Les martyrs persans à travers leurs actes syriaques," *Atti del convegno sul tema: La Persia e il mondo greco-romano* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 363. Quaderno 76; Rome, 1966), 213–25; C. Jullien, "Martyrs en Perse dans l'hagiographie syro-orientale: le tournant du VIe siècle," in J. Beaucamp et alii (eds.), *Juifs et chrétiens en Arabie. Regards croisés sur les sources* (Centre de re-

customs and how their rituals were performed (§ 6). Probably due to his origins, he is well informed of the political relations between the Persian and Byzantine Empires. For example, he knows of Zabargān, the leader of the delegation sent to Justinian by Khusrō (§ 9), and he mentions troop movements at the time when Roman-Persian hostilities broke out again in the regions surrounding the Caspian Sea and Azerbaijan (§ 8), in Syria (§ 13) and on the Roman *limes* (frontier region) (§ 19; § 24).

The reference to the spread of the cult of Grigor's relics "to other places and faraway lands" (§ 28), conveyed from the Sasanian Empire by East Syrian Christians, could provide some chronological indication for the text: a church dedicated to Grigor the Ražik (i.e., from Bēth Raziqāyē) was built by East Syrians in Dvin, Armenia, in the middle of the sixth century. The structure's rediscovered dedication provides a date: the seventeenth year of the reign of Khusrō, i.e., 548, under the Marzpanate of Nihorakan (Varaz-Tiroç II Bagratuni), although this church was probably finished in 629.[16] The *Martyrdom of Grigor* itself was disseminated in Armenian circles (*BHO* 354).

The author was most likely a cleric who wrote the life of Grigor for liturgical reasons so that it could be read on the commemorative day of the saint's martyrdom for the celebrants, including pilgrims, who had gathered to pray at his tomb near the relics at Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē (i.e., Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the city mentioned in § 28).[17] By the end of the narrative, the

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cherche d'Histoire et Civilisation de Byzance, Monographies 32. Le massacre de Najrân II; Paris, 2011), 279–90.

[16] N. Garsoïan, *L'Église arménienne et le Grand Schisme d'Orient* (CSCO 574, Subsidia 100; Louvain, 1999), 228, n. 283; 476–77. T. Greenwood, "Sasanian Reflections in Armenian Sources," *e-Sasanika* 3 (2008), 23–24.

[17] The canonists of the West Syrian synods place particular emphasis on the importance of these stories, their preservation, and their transmission (A. Vööbus, *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition* II [CSCO 376, Scriptores syri 164; Louvain, 1976], 218–19). Cf. parallels in the

Martyrdom seems to identify its function as a text to be performed at the martyr's tomb on his feast day: "As for those of us who are gathered for the spiritual feast of the commemoration of the holy martyr, we will imitate and admire his actions" (§ 29). The author also mentions reliquaries that held his remains. In the narrative, crowds around the martyr's corpse attempt to collect small pieces of his remains in order to make precious *ḥnana*, a kind of paste composed of bone dust and used as a cure or for exorcism (§§ 28–29).[18] Such material would be gathered at the site by pilgrims at the time of the annual reading of the story.

The shared style and lexicon of the two martyrdoms suggest they have the same author. Furthermore, *The Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh* makes explicit reference to Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp and his martyrdom, which serves as a model for the account to follow (§ 1; see also § 4). Yazd-panāh progresses in the shadow of Grigor, from his conversion (§§ 1–2, 7, 10) to his baptism (§ 2) and finally his death as a martyr: "After …he learnt of the saint's death for the true faith from the faithful, from that moment, he received strength and a fortitude that transcended the nature of rational beings" (§ 4). In both texts, the author relates the conversion of dignitaries following the preaching of the two protagonists (Grigor § 15; § 19 and Yazd-panāh § 6).

Not only does the protagonist of the latter text look to that of the former, but the latter also demonstrates a similar knowledge about the geopolitical situation, including specific details about the military advances of the armies of the King of Kings. The city of Pērōz-Šābuhr, which served as a strategic camp for Khusrō, then at war against the Romans on the *limes*

Acts of Mār Māri, § 34, eds. C. Jullien and F. Jullien, *Les Actes de Mār Māri* (CSCO 603, Scriptores syri 235; Louvain, 2003), trans. 51–52.

[18] On *ḥnana*, see C. Jullien and F. Jullien, "Du ḥnana. Ou la bénédiction contestée," in F. Briquel Chatonnet *et alii* (eds.), *Sur les pas des araméens chrétiens. Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux* (Cahier des Études syriaques 1; Paris, 2010), 333–48.

(§ 5), is also mentioned. It is already named in the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* (§ 19), also in the context of war: the text recounts the establishment of a camp and the transfer of chain-laden prisoners along with the army while the trial was in progress.

The church where both martyrs were commemorated was in fact the same: the bodies of these saints were brought to Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē and set in adjacent tombs (§§ 10–11), and the description of the crowds of pilgrims eager to obtain relics – especially *ḥnana* – around the remains of Yazd-panāh resembles the conclusion of the *Martyrdom of Grigor*. These two texts clearly derive from, if not the same hand, the same community, and they are always linked in the manuscripts (one following the other). The sequence of events seem to have taken place in a brief enough time to remain present and linked in the writer's memory. They were probably composed soon after the events they describe.

OUTLINE

Martyrdom of Mār Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp

§ 1	Preamble: the spread of Christianity in a time of peace.
§ 2	Beginning of the persecution.
§§ 3–6	The conversion and baptism of Mār Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp during the festival of Frawardīgān.
§ 7	First imprisonment and release.
§§ 8–9	Roman-Persian war; Grigor captured by the Romans, honored by the emperor. Return to Persia.
§§ 10–12	Continuing persecution and torture. Debate with Zoroastrians.
§ 13	Resumption of hostilities with the Romans and war against the Huns.

§§ 14–17	Grigor is threatened. Transfer to the prison of Dastgerd d-Bēth Balān. Conversion of prisoners to Christianity and ensuing consequences.
§ 18	Arrival of a delegation of bishops and other Christians at the royal court to protest the destruction of churches and monasteries.
§ 19	Resumption of hostilities with the Romans. Mihrān's betrayal.
§§ 20–23	Death sentence. Final farewells and final threats from the magi.
§§ 24–26	Execution.
§ 27	Panegyric of the saint.
§ 28	Wonders around Grigor's body.
§ 29	Commemoration.

Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh

§ 1a	Further persecution following the death of Mār Grigor. Yazd-panāh in prison.
§§ 1b–3	*Flashback*: a portrait of Yazd-panāh including his life, his conversion, and his imprisonment. Polemic against the magi.
§ 4	*Resumption of the story*. Threats and discussion.
§§ 5–6	Roman-Persian war. New debates.
§§ 7–8	Exhortation to the faithful. Pressure from the magi.
§§ 9–11	Execution; removal of the body.
Excursus § 10	Identity of the person tasked with the burial and the punishment of the wicked.
§ 12	ʿAwira the Confessor.
§ 13	Conclusion.

A HAGIOGRAPHIC CYCLE

Several collections of Persian martyr acts may be read as "cycles." They are not always necessarily all by the same author, but these texts relate shared circumstances and characters and are sometimes associated with the same holy sites.[19] The two hagiographies in this volume contain elaborate structures with a clear narrative sequence as well as intertextual references. *The Martyrdom of Grigor* can in fact be the source for what may be understood to be a cycle of martyr acts. The subsequent *Martyrdom of Yazd-panāh* contains many easily recognizable allusions to the story of Grigor. According to our texts, Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp, a general of the King's armies, converted from Zoroastrianism to Christianity.[20] His conversion then inspires other Zoroastrian dignitaries who carry out important functions within Sasanian civil society to convert to Christianity in rapid succession. They are Yazd-panāh, ʿAwira, whose conversion is narrated at the end of Yazd-panāh's story, and Yazd-bōzēd. The latter's story is preserved in Armenian.[21] Moreover, his name is mentioned at the beginning of these narratives and Yazd-panāh was buried near his relics, which were preserved at Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē, today the region of central Iraq.

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[19] E.g., P. Devos, "Abgar, hagiographe perse méconnu," *Analecta Bollandiana* 83 (1965), 303–28.

[20] According to R. Gyselen, only four generals were in charge of the armies; each one had authority over one an area, as the empire was divided into four parts. R. Gyselen, *The Four Generals of the Sasanian Empire: Some Sigillographic Evidence* (*Conferenze* 14; Rome, 2001); *Ead.*, "La désignation territoriale des quatre *spāhbed* de l'empire sassanide d'après les sources primaires sigillographiques," *Studia Iranica* 30 (2001), 137–41.

[21] Cf. *ASS* Novembris IV, vol. 11, 204–16. On the worship of Grigor and Yazd-bōzēd, who have been venerated together in Armenia, especially in Dvin, and the Syro-Armenian tradition, see G. Tēr-Mkrtčʿean, "Grigor-Mana Ṙažik Mihran tohmicʿ," *Ararat* 35 (1901), 468–74 (in Armenian).

There are also cross references between the story of Mār Abbā and those of the cycle. One of the characters in the story of Mār Yazd-panāh plays a role in that of Mār Abbā, Ābrōdag, a court dignitary in service to the King of Kings. He publicly embraces Christianity, takes up the defence of Christians, and, like a new Tobit, does not hesitate to give them a proper burial, despite an official ban (§ 10).[22]

THE IRANIAN POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND TO THE MARTYRDOMS

As suggested above, these hagiographies were likely written by a contemporary of the martyrs. They reflect the cultural and religious environment in Persia in the second half of the sixth century CE. The author was well informed about Khusrō's foreign policy, which is mentioned in passing in both texts, for instance, the resumption of hostilities with the Byzantine Empire in 540.[23] One of Khusrō's first political actions upon acceding to the throne was to establish peace, signing a treaty in the year 532, which was linked to an annual war tribute paid by Justinian.[24] In 540, Khusrō invaded Mesopotamia and Syria and had prisoners deported mainly to Bēth Aramāyē, to the camp known as Weh-Andiyok-Khusrō ("Khusrō's Better Antioch"). Thereafter, in 545, a five-year truce was concluded and guaranteed by tribute paid to the Persians by the Byzantines.[25] The events of these martyr acts seem to take place within the broader context of

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[22] *History of Mār Abbā* § 15, ed. F. Jullien, *Histoire de Mār Abba. Martyres de Mār Grigor et de Mār Yazd-panāh*, Syr. 17–18, trans. 20.

[23] Also see Procopius, *Persian Wars*, II, 5, 1–9, 18, ed. H.A. Dewing, *Procopius* V. *History of the Wars. Book VII (continued) and VIII* (London, 1962), 294–343. G. Greatrex and S.N.C. Lieu, *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars (AD 363–630)* II. *A Narrative Sourcebook* (London, 2002).

[24] G. Greatrex, *Rome and Persia at War, 502–532* (ARCA Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 37; Leeds, 1998).

[25] Cf. G. Tate, *Justinien: l'épopée de l'Empire d'Orient, 527–565* (Paris, 2004), 521–22.

these affairs. The author also mentions the war waged by the Persian armies against the Hephthalites on the northern borders of the empire (*Grigor* § 13). Khusrō had won several temporary victories against them, especially in 541, but the authority of the Persians was not definitively established in the region until 557.

While they were not at the heart of the author's literary preoccupations, the Roman-Persian conflicts are referenced, and, even more significantly, from a perspective that sheds light on their consequences for the Christian community. The author seems to use the war with Byzantium as a tool for framing the question of the status of Christians in the Sasanian Empire (*Grigor* §§ 7, 13, 19; *Yazd-panāh* § 5). Furthermore, the writer refers to other conflicts such as the antagonism that existed between the Persians and the Huns: the author describes the terror caused by the violence of the Hun tribes in the northern regions of the Iranian Empire (*Grigor* §§ 13–14). The texts' account of the realities of political life, including the relocation of the court in times of war (*Grigor* § 24), as well as their apparent acquaintance with certain social hierarchies and the various functions held by the magi and civil authorities suggest their value as historical sources.[26]

The protagonists of these martyrologies were leading players in Persian civil society. It has been observed that Christians at the time could perform high state functions: "Honorary functions (…) and offices were bestowed upon them by the Persian Kings," the author of the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* remarks at the beginning of the work, while also emphasising "the great love these same kings had for them and their loyalty when running the kingdom" (§ 1).[27] A number of specific administrative titles

[26] On the historical value of these sources, see Ph. Gignoux, "Pour une nouvelle histoire de l'Iran sasanide," in W. Skalmowski and A. Van Tongerloo (eds.), *Middle Iranian Studies* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 16; Louvain, 1984), 253–62.

[27] On this topic, Payne, *A State of Mixture*, 133–47; S.J. McDonough, "Bishops or Bureaucrats?: Christian Clergy and the State in the Middle Sasanian Period," in D. Kennet and P. Luft (eds.), *Current Research in*

are mentioned throughout the narratives, such as that of *rad*, a high-ranking state official (*Grigor* § 14). Grigor probably held the position of *spāhbed*, a kind of the general-in-chief of the empire, one of the four high military commands instituted by Khusrō I when he reformed the state. Grigor's office entailed authority over the border and affairs of the North. It is said that "many thousands of riders were placed under his authority" (*Grigor* § 3).[28] Details are also provided on the hierarchy of the Zoroastrian clergy, including references to the *mowbedān mowbed*, head of the magi, to the great *mowbed* or *mowpeṭa*, and to the *mowbed* in charge of a province (*Yazd-panāh* §§ 2, 5; *Grigor* § 14). These references sometimes point to changes in the types of administrative offices and their titles compared to the dynasty's early period,[29] and they also shed light on specific administrative practices, such as the *mowbed*'s authority to appoint his own successor.

Although it belongs to a hagiographical rejection of Zoroastrian learning, the texts' emphasis on the protagonists' religious education perhaps tells us something about the religious formation of elites within the Sasanian Empire. The texts readily

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Sasanian Archaeology, Art and History. Proceedings of a Conference held at Durham University, November 3rd and 4th, 2001 (Bar International series 1810; Oxford, 2008), 87–92.

[28] Regarding these different titles, see, in particular, R. Gyselen, *Nouveaux matériaux pour la géographie historique de l'empire sassanide: sceaux administratifs de la collection Ahmad Saeedi* (Studia Iranica. Cahier 24; Paris, 2002); R. Gyselen, *La géographie administrative de l'empire sassanide. Les témoignages épigraphiques en moyen-perse* (Res Orientales XXV; Bures-sur-Yvette, 2019); R. Gyselen, *The Four Generals of the Sasanian Empire*; Ph. Gignoux, "Titres et fonctions sasanides d'après les sources syriaques hagiographiques," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 28/1–4 (1983), 191–203; Ph. Gignoux, "Pour une esquisse des fonctions religieuses sous les Sasanides," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986), 96–102; A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 130–32.

[29] See Ph. Gignoux, "Titres et fonctions sasanides," p. 191–203.

emphasise the religious education the protagonists receive, showing their attachment to Zoroastrianism before they convert to Christianity. Yazd-panāh is one of the magi of Susiana, renowned for their science: "He had been instructed in this doctrine more than all of them, as Moses had been in the wisdom of the Egyptians" (§ 1). Grigor is presented as a believer, brought up "in Magism, the religion of [his] ancestors" (§ 4). In most cases, they are described as zealous believers, a portrayal intended to lend more weight to the nature of their sudden conversion and the inescapable reality of Christian truth.

Furthermore, these texts provide a remarkable testimony to Zoroastrian religious traditions, such as the exposure of the dead to wild animals (*Yazd-panāh* § 5), as well as other, lesser-known practices. They also include references to particular festivals and their proceedings, such as Frawardīgān, a religious celebration devoted to the spirits of the dead, the *fravašis*, which was celebrated in March before the new year festivities.[30] The story of the life of Grigor contains a detailed description, spanning four days of the festival (*Grigor* §§ 3–6).[31] According to Pahlavi sources, the festivities lasted ten days, which were divided into five full days of celebration and five intercalary days preceding the new year. According to the Syriac text, speeches, which punctuated the ceremonies, were given each day by a different religious figure or even a civil one, such as Grigor, general of the king's armies.

The role the *spāhbedh* would have played in the ceremony makes more sense when we consider the relationship the *fravašis* were understood to have with humanity. Marijan Molé under-

[30] See W. Malandra, "Frawardīgān," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 10/2 (Costa Mesa, 2000), 199; M. Boyce, "Fravaši," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 10/2 (Costa Mesa, 2000), 195–99; M. Boyce, "On the Calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts," *BSOAS* 33 (1970), 513–39.

[31] F. Jullien, "Contacts et échanges mazdéo-chrétiens sous Husraw I^{er}. L'apport de textes syriaques contemporains," in C. Jullien (ed.), *Husraw I^{er} – Reconstructions d'un règne. Sources et documents* (Studia Iranica. Cahier 53; Paris, 2015), 175–93.

lines the essentially warlike aspect of the *fravašis*, who could help humanity in their fight for righteousness and the triumph of good, although they were also invoked for their protective power in times of peril (§§ 3–6).[32] In his study of funeral practices among the sedentary peoples of Central Asia, Frantz Grenet distinguishes an individual cult honouring the *fravašis* from the collective cult in the days of Frawardīgān.[33] According to the *Frawardīn Yašt* (13, 49–52), the thirteenth of the Zoroastrian hymns (*yašts*) devoted to this group of deities (the *fravašis*), during Frawardīgān offerings of food and clothing are to be made to the spirits of the dead, accompanied by prayers,[34] all of which is echoed in the *Martyrdom of Grigor*.

The Syriac author describes the material organization of the festivities: civil dignitaries take turns organising a banquet (probably with their own resources) and providing largess to the clergy, including in-kind donations. The banquet comes after public prayers and the text specifies that these celebrations draw a significant crowd of magi from every province of the empire. This last point may suggest that the author conflated two dis-

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[32] M. Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien. Le problème zoroastrien et la tradition mazdéenne* (Paris, 1963), 104–7. Cf. *Frawardīn Yašt* 13, 14–20, ed. J. Kellens (ed.), *Fravardīn Yašt (1–70)* (Iranische Texte 6; Wiesbaden, 1975). See also M. Boyce, "Fravaši," 195–99. A. de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Religions in Graeco-Roman World 133; Leiden, 1997), 301–2.

[33] F. Grenet, *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire, de la conquête grecque à l'islamisation* (Paris, 1984), 38–39; cf. 249 et 258–59.

[34] M. Boyce, "Frawardīn yašt," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 10/2 (Costa Mesa, 2000), 199–201. On the *fravašis*, see J. Kellens, "Les Frauuasis," in J. Ries (ed.), *Anges et Démons* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989), 99–114; J. Kellens, "Résumé des cours et travaux de la chaire de Langues et religions indo-iraniennes du Collège de France," *Annuaire du Collège de France 2008–2009* (Paris, 2010), 747–62. J. Kellens (ed.), *Fravardīn Yašt*, 18–19; trans. F. Wolff, *Avesta. Die heiligen Bücher der Parsen* (Strasbourg, 1910), 236–37.

tinct festivals in his description, those of Frawardīgān and Nowruz, which succeeded each other. It is worth comparing some of the details provided in the text with what we find in a passage from the *Dārāb Hormazyār Rivāyat*, a Zoroastrian book on rituals and customs written in Persian in early modern India. According to this account, which is based upon oral transmission among the Parsis, the Nowruz festival entailed, along with sacrifices, a festival and a banquet-like reception. Celebrants donned new clothes as a sign of the renewal of time and engaged in acts of generosity, particularly toward the *hērbeds* (Zoroastrian priests) who would receive robes of honor and luxurious garments. In return for these gifts, the *hērbeds'* prayers were thought to benefit the community.[35] The *Martyrdom of Grigor* recounts: "The day arrived for him to perform the *yašt* of sin. All the magi rejoiced, saying: 'Today, there is great jubilation and a magnificent festival! And we will also rejoice through all kinds of food (*bmʾkltʾ*), we will don luxurious garments, and we will be honored with great pomp by the chief and leader of all!' " (§ 6).

The appropriate religious vocabulary is also used. Grigor is to recite the *yašt*, for instance (*Grigor* § 6). Furthermore, the Syriac author includes reference to celebrants "speaking incantations" (§ 6) as well as to distinctive Persian punishments for criminal behavior (*Grigor* § 15; *Yazd-panāh* § 12), which are described even with terms borrowed directly from Middle Persian legal vocabulary.[36] These are further indications of the value these texts have for reconstructing the history of Sasanian religious culture.

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[35] *Dārāb Hormazyār Rivāyat* I, 516.15–517.16; Molé, *Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien*, 110.

[36] F. Jullien, "Contacts et échanges mazdéo-chrétiens sous Husraw I^{er}," 175–93; M. Macuch, "The Hērbestān as a Legal Source: A Section on the Inheritance of a Convert to Zoroastrianism," *Iranian and Zoroastrian Studies in Honor of Prods Oktor Skjærvø*, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19 (2005): 91–102.

THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE TEXTS

As is often the case in martyrology, the protagonists of these martyrdoms serve as spokespersons or representatives of what the author deems to be orthodox Christianity. They are cast as models of correct faith against both the paganism of the Sasanian Empire and the heretical Christology of the Byzantines. Their authority is grounded in their ability to imitate Christ and take on the virtues of the illustrious characters of the Old Testament. Thus these accounts of their individual suffering and resistance come to express the East Syrians' foundational ideas about Christianity and the correct theological and even political boundaries of the community.

The defence of the East Syrian faith

The *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* and the *Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh* reflect the religious climate in which the Christian communities of the Sasanian Empire lived in the sixth century, even if they do not provide any significant evidence for the contemporary internal politics of the Church of the East. The texts are outward facing in their focus on exchanges between Christians with different Christological positions, in particular when those positions were mapped along the Byzantine-Sasanian political divide (*Grigor* §§ 7–8).

The author seems to be interested in offering his audience a model of practice and correct doctrine. In the *Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh*, "true faith" is a leitmotif that punctuates the story, underscoring the reason for the protagonist's execution (*Yazd-panāh* §§ 1, 2, 4 and 7). We are often reminded of how despite the afflictions the protagonists endure within the Sasanian realm, the Christianity of Rome is no better. Mār Grigor refuses to stay in Bēth Romāyē despite the threat of persecution in his own country, "because of the Romans' blasphemy regarding the divine nature and the untruth of their belief in the corporeal nature of our Lord Jesus Christ" (§ 9). Grigor refuses the imperial protection of the Chalcedonian Caesar rather than live with Christians whose Christology he discredits and condemns. The *Martyrdom of Grigor* thus highlights the opposition between Christians of the two different empires. Byzantium presented

itself as the guarantor of the Chalcedonian faith, whereas the East Syrian Church upheld a theology they had adopted from the teachings of Theodore of Mopsuestia. This theological difference between the Christians of the two empires is essential for understanding the position of the East Syrian authorities regarding Zoroastrian political power: the Christians of the Sasanian Empire accepted a government that was considered pagan (*ḥanpā*), despite the violence to which they were at times subjected, rather than obtain assistance from the "heretical" Byzantines.

In the texts from this period, there is no notion of a common destiny for Christians across both empires. On the contrary, the hagiographer recognises the crucial need for military treaties to establish a climate of détente and peace and the role they would play in temporarily eliminating the violence suffered by the Christians of the Sasanian Empire. Many Christians under Khusrō I were of Persian origin. They were integrated into Sasanian society and its aristocratic networks, and some held important administrative functions within imperial institutions. Such was the case for most of the protagonists of the martyr acts from this period. Faced with a Byzantine power that at times ill-treated non-Chalcedonian Christians, that is, West Syrians and those whom the Chalcedonian sources often contemptuously refer to as "followers of Nestorius," the Christians of Persia had no choice other than to show political loyalty to the Sasanian king when confronted with the challenge of integration.[37]

Zoroastrian-Christian debates

Syriac sources on the reign of Khusrō I and after report a wide range of encounters between Christians and Zoroastrians, from private discussions to alleged public debates where theological

[37] On this matter, see, in particular, A. Panaino, *Politica religiosa e regalità sacra nell'Iran preislamico*, a cura di V. Sadovski, F. Martelli, P. Ognibene, con la collaborazione redazionale di S. Circassia e R. Cascioli (Indo-Iranica et Orientalia f.s. 2; Milan, 2007).

matters were argued. The sources, which form a remarkable corpus for the study of interreligious relations in the sixth century, focus particularly on the course and progress of these debates, while also detailing the themes broached by the parties and the issues that were addressed.[38]

Under Khusrō I, there are several examples of interreligious polemic, both written works and possible real episodes of polemical encounter and exchange.[39] In his *Catalogue*, a poetical work that provides an account of the works composed by many earlier East Syrian authors, the medieval writer ʿAbdīšōʿ of Nisibis claims that Aḥudemmeh, the famous sixth century East Syrian missionary, wrote a book in which he polemicized against the magi.[40] Mār Abbā, as well, according to the *Chronicle of Seert*, attempted to disprove Zoroastrian doctrine by writing

[38] In the same period there are references to these Zoroastrian-Christian debates in the *Passio Simonis et Judae* and the *Passio Matthaei* of Pseudo-Abdias, two different apocryphal Acts of the Apostles composed in the Latin West in the sixth century. Both these stories relate the circumstances of a polemic between the apostles Simon and Judas Thaddaeus and two magi, Zaroes (Zarōē) and Arphaxat (Ardašīr), who had fled Ethiopia and taken refuge in Persia. *Passio Matthaei* (*BHL* 5690–1); cf. G.P. Maggioni (ed.), *Iacopo da Varazze. Legenda Aurea. Edizione critica. Seconda edizione rivista dall'autore* (Millenio Medievale 6, Testi 3; Firenze, 1998), 960, chap. CXXXVI, 48. *Passio Simonis et Judae* (*BHL* 7749–51); G.P. Maggioni (ed.), *ibid.*, 1083, chap. CLV, 47. D. Alibert, G. Besson, M. Brossard-Dandré, and S. Mimouni, "Actes latins des apôtres (collection dite du Pseudo-Abdias). *Passion de Simon et Jude*," in P. Geoltrain, J.-D. Kaestli (eds.), *Écrits apocryphes chrétiens*, II (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade 516; Paris, 2005), 837–64. Such encounters have also been suggested as having taken place between Jews and Zoroastrians. Cf. Shai Secunda, *The Iranian Talmud: Reading the Bavli in its Sasanian Context* (Philadelphia, 2016), 34–63.

[39] R. Payne, "Les polémiques syro-orientales contre le zoroastrisme et leurs contextes politiques," in F. Ruani (ed.), *Les controverses religieuses en syriaque* (Études syriaques 13; Paris, 2016), 239–60.

[40] J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca orientalis clementino-vaticana*, III/1 (Rome, 1725), 192.

treatises and books, possibly for Zoroastrian readers.[41] The *Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh* itself describes a polemical encounter between Christians and Zoroastrians (§§ 2, 5, 6).

The extant polemical works attest to an open engagement with the theological notions of the opposing religious community. The *Škennand Gumānīh Wizār*, a ninth-century Pahlavi text written by a certain Mardān-Farrox, dedicates its fifteenth chapter to Zoroastrian apologetics against Christianity.[42] It tackles Christological questions that later formed the basis of debates with Islam, such as the incarnation of the Word of God, the virginal conception of Mary, the nature of Christ, and his suffering as true God and true human being. In Christian anti-Zoroastrian polemic, the relationship between the creator and creation is one of the main themes of discussion: the worship of the sun, the stars, and fire is a leitmotif that points to the idolatrous dimension of the denounced cult.[43]

Alongside these works that employ a more ornate rhetoric and a rarified theological approach, some sources also attest more personal encounters, particularly for Zoroastrians. In a passage in the introduction to what would later be known as *Kalila and Dimna*, Khusrō's doctor, Burzōy, recounts how in his

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[41] A. Scher, *Histoire nestorienne inédite (Chronique de Séert)*, II/1 (PO 7; Paris, 1911), 157 [65].

[42] P.J. de Menasce, *Une apologétique mazdéenne du IX^e siècle. Škand-Gumānīk Vičār. La solution décisive des doutes* (Fribourg, 1945), chap. XV ; F. Grenet, "Religions du monde iranien ancien," *Annuaire 2004–2005 de l'École pratique des Hautes Études* 113 (Paris, 2006), 147. Cf. Ph. Gignoux, "La controverse dans le mazdéisme tardif," in A. Le Boulluec (ed.), *La controverse et ses formes* (Paris, 1994), 127–49.

[43] E.g., John of Ephesus, *Ecclesiastical History* II, 19–22, R. Payne Smith (ed.) *The Third Part of the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus* (Oxford, 1860), 119–26. Cf. Ph. Gignoux, "L'eau et le feu dans le zoroastrisme," in G. Capdeville (ed.), *L'eau et le feu dans les religions antiques* (*Actes du premier colloque international d'histoire des religions organisé par l'école doctorale*: Les mondes de l'Antiquité*, Paris, 18–20 mai 1995*) (Paris, 2004), 269–82.

own spiritual quest, which brought him to the leaders of different religious communities, he sought to compare their various teachings.[44] A passage of the story of Mār Yazd-panāh reports similar contacts between religious communities: early in the account, Yazd-panāh, who is Zoroastrian by birth, seeks out the so-called "sons of the Covenant" to engage with them concerning theological questions (§§ 1–2).[45]

Reworking of biblical models and identification with Christ

By fitting the account of the martyr into certain biblical models, especially that one offered by the suffering of Christ, the author renders the martyr himself as a model of the heroic virtues of loyalty and perseverance.[46] This is particularly evident in the account of Mār Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp: denounced by a close family member, he is imprisoned in a deep pit. This recalls not

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[44] Th. Nöldeke, *Burzōēs Einleitung zu dem Buche Kalila wa Dimna übersetzt und erklärt* (Strasbourg, 1912), 15; G. Klinge, "Burzoe, der Leibarzt von Chosrow Anuschirwan," in G. Jäschke (ed.), *Festschrift Friedrich Giese aus Anlaß des siebenzigsten Geburtstags überreicht von Freunden und Schülern* (Die Welt des Islams. Sonderband; Leipzig, 1941), 143; F. de Blois, *Burzoy's Voyage to India and the Origin of the Book of Kalīlah wa Dimna* (London, 1990), 40–43.

[45] On these interreligious encounters with Zoroastrians, see S. Secunda, "Studying with a Magus/Like Giving a Tongue to a Wolf," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 9 (2009), 151–57; R. Kiperwasser and S. Ruzer, "To Convert a Persian and Teach him the Holy Scriptures: A Zoroastrian Proselyte in Rabbinic and Syriac Christian Narratives," in G. Herman (ed.), *Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians. Religious Dynamics in a Sasanian Context* (Judaism in Context 17; Piscataway, 2014), 101–38; F. Jullien, "Une pratique religieuse en médiation culturelle entre chrétiens et mazdéens," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 79/2 (2013), 337–53; Ph. Gignoux, "Sur quelques relations entre chrétiens et mazdéens d'après des sources syriaques," *Studia Iranica* 28 (1999), 83–94.

[46] J. Labourt had already underlined the apologetic dimension of the martyrs' statements (J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide (224–632)* [Paris, 1904], 59–60).

only Judas' betrayal, but also that of the brothers of the patriarch Joseph, who held him prisoner in a dried-out well (Gen 37:22, 28–29). Furthermore, it is reminiscent of the story of the prophet Jeremiah, also cast into a pit (Jer 38:1–13), as well as of course that of Daniel, thrown into the lions' den (Dan 6:17–25). The narrator in fact draws a direct reference to Daniel (§ 8).

This biblical modeling is perhaps less apparent in the figures of Mār Yazd-panāh and ʿAwira. However, there may be a parallel between ʿAwira's torture and the biblical *exemplum* that is often traditionally referenced in hagiographic stories, the account of the woman's seven sons who are executed in the story of the Maccabees (2 Macc 7). Because of their resistance to pagan law and their subsequent suffering, Christian martyrs are often compared to these so-called Maccabean martyrs.[47] ʿAwira's tormenters decide not to take his life but to "sever parts of his earlobes and nostrils" (§ 12). The torture that he suffers, apparently an adapted and reduced form of the Persian torment known as "the nine deaths," recalls that of the first son, whose limbs are severed (2 Macc 7:4). In the Sasanian era, this form of execution was usually reserved for converted former Zoroastrians, who were considered apostates. The victim's fingers, toes, ankles, wrists, knees, arms, thighs, and finally their ears and nose were progressively severed. We find reference to such macabre forms of execution in other earlier Persian Martyr Acts, such as the extremely popular *Jacob Intercisus*, or "Jacob the sliced up one," and the *Martyrdom of Jacob the Notary*.[48] In the

[47] On the popularity of this story and the cult of the Maccabees in Christian circles, see S. Deléani, "Une typologie du martyre chrétien: la passion des frères Maccabées et de leur mère selon saint Cyprien," in M. Lamberigts and P. van Deun (eds.), *Martyrium in multidisciplinary perspective. Memorial Louis Reekmans* (Leuven, 1995), 202–3. R. Ziadé, *Les martyrs Maccabées: de l'histoire juive au culte chrétien. Les homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze et de Jean Chrysostome* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 80; Leiden, 2007).

[48] *BHO* 394, Syr. *AMS* II, 539–58; P. Devos, "Le dossier hagiographique de S. Jacques l'Intercis I. La passion grecque inédite (*BHG* 772)," *Ana-*

Martyrdom of Pethion, which purports to describe events that took place during the reign of Yazdgird II (438–57), one of the heroes is chopped up and his limbs are hung on a tree.[49] The reality of his punishment aside, as well as its links to Sasanian practice, such methods of punishment may echo for hagiographers the story of the Maccabean martyrs, which, as stated, includes bodily mutilation and was popular in Christian circles.

The primary reference in these acts, the main model, is still, however, Christ. The theme of the imitation of Christ is at the very heart of much hagiography and this is the case for both the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* and the *Martyrdom of Mār Yazdpanāh*. The search for a parallel with Jesus, especially in the passion narrative, progressively leads to an imitation or even borrowing of divine power. The martyr is often presented as another Christ, including in his endurance of persecution. Some scenes in the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* thus mirror sequences of the Passion of Christ, allowing the audience to draw a comparison that makes the martyr truly Christlike. Before his execution, Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp experiences agony that the Syriac author evokes through lines from the Gethsemane episode in the Gospel, particularly Matt 26:42 (§ 24); Grigor gives up his spirit before dying (cf. Matt 10:17–22; Acts 7:55–60) (§ 25); moreover, he is executed on Good Friday, upon the sixth hour (§§ 23–24), whereupon darkness shrouds the sky (cf. Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44) (§ 27).[50]

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lecta Bollandiana 71 (1953), 157–210; Id., "Le dossier hagiographique de S. Jacques l'Intercis. La passion grecque inédite (deuxième article)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 72 (1954), 213–56. C. Jullien and F. Jullien (eds.), *Les textes migrateurs. Transmissions interculturelles entre Orient et Occident* (Subsidia Hagiographica 100; Bruxelles, *in preparation*).

[49] J. Corluy, "Historia Sancti Mar Pethion martyris," *Analecta Bollandiana* 7 (1888), 36. The Pethion Cycle is discussed in Payne, *A State of Mixture*, 60–92.

[50] The same phenomena are described at the moment Guiwarguis Mihr-Māh-Gušnasp dies, including an earthquake (see Matt 27:51), in the twenty-fifth year of Khusrō II (615), *AMS* I, 282. See Ph. Gignoux, "Une

NOTE ON EDITORIAL METHOD

The critical edition and translation of the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* and the *Martyrdom of Mār Yazd-panāh* is based on the oldest known manuscript (12th–13th century), Ms. British Library Add. 7200 (= L). In the apparatus we have indicated variants from Ms. Berlin or. Oct. 1257 (= B), which is a copy of Ms. Diyarbakır 96 (probably from the ninth century) now lost. In many places, L is badly damaged by moisture; when the punctuation was illegible, B was chosen. There is water damage running from the binding outwards into the verso and the recto from the top of the codex as far as thirteen lines down and at times running several words into each line. A second scribal hand has rewritten some words or sentences at the beginning of lines on the recto folio and at the end of lines on the verso folio. We have mentioned these readings (L^2) in the apparatus when they are different from B.

Compared to the CSCO edition which preceded this one, the apparatus has been greatly reduced. It does not include variations in spelling (including apparent misspellings) nor does it mention differences between the manuscripts regarding combined word forms, contractions (i.e., participle and pronoun), or abbreviations. All of these have been expanded when found. The exception with regard to abbreviations is if there is ambiguity concerning what the unabbreviated form would be. When there have been differences in spelling between the manuscripts,

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typologie des miracles des saints et martyrs perses," in D. Aigle (ed.), *Miracle et Karama. Les saints et leurs miracles à travers l'hagiographie chrétienne et islamique, Colloque de Paris, 23–25 novembre 1995* (Bibliothèque de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études. Sciences religieuses 109. Hagiographies médiévales comparées 2; Turnhout, 2000), 515. Parallels with other texts can be mentioned. For instance, the martyrdom of the Catholicos Simeon Bar Ṣabbaʿē under Šābuhr II, possibly executed in 341, takes place on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan (March-April), a Good Friday (e.g., Kyle Smith, trans. The Martyrdom *and* The History of Blessed Simeon Bar Ṣabbaʿe [Persian Martyr Acts in Syriac: Text and Translation 3; Piscataway, NJ, 2014], 208).

words have been made consistent with what is found in Michael Sokoloff's *A Syriac Lexicon* (Winona Lake, IN; Piscataway, NJ, 2009). At times we find inserted above the line in the manuscripts letters the scribe accidentally dropped. This is especially common in L where they seem often to be instances where the letters were silent in pronunciation. When these insertions are in the same hand as the original and they seem like on the spot corrections of minor slips of the pen, which have no significant bearing on textual variability, they have not been included in the apparatus. Furthermore, no mention is made of those places where the scribe seems to have written certain letters above or below the line in order to save space. Asterisks in the translation indicate breaks between folio pages.

The texts have been divided into paragraphs and numbered for greater legibility. Brackets have been set around proper names, offices (e.g., magi, Emperor), and toponyms that had to be added to clarify the sense of the text. We have not included them in places in the translation where inference was required to make sense of the text, because the Syriac text is offered with the translation and any readers of Syriac will be able to grasp how we came up with our reading. Middle Persian names have been written in their Pahlavi form, according to the spellings in the *Iranisches Personennamenbuch* collection (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna), as are the names of administrative and religious functionaries and toponyms.[51]

[51] For the different spellings in general, see *Encyclopædia Iranica*; for anthroponyms: Ph. Gignoux, C. Jullien, and F. Jullien, *Noms propres syriaques d'origine iranienne* (Iranisches Personennamenbuch, Band VII. Iranische Namen in Semitischer Nebenüberlieferungen, Fasz. V; Vienna, 2009); for functions and toponyms, see R. Gyselen, *Nouveaux matériaux pour la géographie historique de l'empire sassanide*; cf. also Ph. Huyse, *Die dreisprachige Inschrift Šābuhrs I. an der Kaʿba-i Zardušt (ŠKZ)* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum Part III. Royal Inscriptions, with their parthian and greek versions Texts I. Pahlavi Inscriptions* (London, 1999).

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

MARTYRDOM OF MĀR GRIGOR PĪRĀN-GUŠNASP

Now, the Martyrdom of Mār Grigor, the illustrious martyr who bore witness in the days of King Khusrō.

Preamble

1 It was the year 850 of the Greek Empire.[1] After the gospel of our Lord Christ had been proclaimed from one end of the land to the other, the pagan persecution had quieted down, and the tricks of demons targeting Christianity had ceased, paganism[2] was disappearing and vanishing, faith in Christ was expanding and growing day by day throughout the world, churches and monasteries were being built without fear and they were abounding in every country, everywhere, and believers were being converted most manifestly, enjoying great freedom not only in villages and towns, but also before kings and before governors and nobles.

[1] 538 CE.

[2] Zoroastrianism is frequently assimilated to a kind of paganism in Syriac martyrological literature.

[Fol. 73r] ܕܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܗ ܕܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܘܡܪܝ ܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ[3] ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ[4] ܐܡܝܢ ܕܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܗ ܕܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܘܡܪܝ ܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ.

1 ܐ ܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܝ ܓܪܝܓܘܪ ܕܟܪܝܣܛܘܣ ܒܪ ܐܒܐ ܕܟܠ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܘܩܕܝܫܝܢ ܕܫܪܝܪ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܓܪܝܓܘܪ ܒܪ ܦܝܪܐܢ[5] ܕܒܫܡ[6] ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܗ ܕܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܘܡܪܝ ܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ[7] ܐܡܝܢ ܕܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܗ ܕܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܘܡܪܝ ܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܗ ܕܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܘܡܪܝ ܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ[8] ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ[9] ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܒܫܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܠܗ ܕܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܘܡܪܝ ܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܐܡܝܢ

Honorary functions, diadems, and offices were bestowed upon them by the Persian kings[10] and they were openly gaining notability with kings and their nobility through the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the same way, due to the great love these same kings had for them and because they noticed their fear of God and their loyalty when running the kingdom, the kings ordered that edicts be provided that no one among the magi or pagans were allowed to harass or harm Christians in any way on the grounds of the true faith.[11] On the contrary, they be allowed to build churches and monasteries wherever they desired. And no one was allowed to harass anyone who had been catechised and had become a Christian in any way. This occurred from the reign of King Pērōz until the tenth year of King Khusrō.[12]

[10] There were a number of Christian notables in the Sasanian civil administration at the time. The integration of Christians and especially the ecclesial hierarchy into royal society would lead to a progressive interference of civil authorities in the internal life of the Church. See R. Payne, *A State of Mixture. Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 56; Oakland, 2015); McDonough, S. J., "Bishops or Bureaucrats?: Christian Clergy and the State in the Middle Sasanian Period," in D. Kennet and P. Luft (eds.), *Current Research in Sasanian Archaeology, Art and History. Proceedings of a Conference held at Durham University, November 3rd and 4th, 2001* (Bar International series 1810; Oxford, 2008), 87–92. C. Jullien, *Les liens du sol. Images du pouvoir et identités des chrétiens sous Khusrō I^er^* (Studia Iranica. Cahier 64; Paris, Louvain), 2023.

[11] B: "faith in Christ."

[12] In 541. This should read: "from the end of the reign of King Pērōz" (484–88), during which Christians were tormented according to the *Chronicle of Seert*, ed. A. Scher, *Histoire nestorienne inédite (Chronique de Séert)*, II/1 (PO 7; Turnhout, 1950), 101 [9].

ܡܫܪ ܠܟܘ ܀ ܕܡܒܪܟ ܪܒܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܠܟ ܪܒܬ ܒܢܝ ܐܢ ܕ
ܐܦ[13] ܀ ܪܒܢܝܬ ܪܝܫܐ ܕܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܡܒܪܝܟ ܕܡܫ ܪܒ ܒܢ
ܪ ܀ ܪܒܫ ܟ ܐܢ ܪܒܚ ܟ ܒܪ ܀ ܪܒܐ ܕܡ ܫܡܥ
ܠܟ ܢܬ ܟ ܫ ܪ ܀ ܪܒܟܬ ܕܡ ܒܪ ܐ ܥ ܠ
ܪܒܫ ܪܒ[14] ܀ ܪܒ ܕܡ ܠܟ ܪ ܀[15] ܪܒ ܕ ܪ ܀ ܪ
ܪ ܒܪ ܀ ܪܒ ܐ ܪ ܒ ܒ ܒ ܒ ܀ ܪ ܒ ܪ
ܒ ܪ ܀ ܪ ܒ ܪ ܀[16] ܡ ܪ ܠ ܀ ܪ ܒ ܪ ܠ ܟ
ܪ ܀ ܪ ܒ ܪ ܒ ܪ ܒ ܪ ܀

[13] LB ܐܦ
[14] L add. in margin : B ܪܫܝܥܝܐ ܪܒܬܟܐ
[15] B om.
[16] L ܐܡܪ

Beginning of the persecution

2 However, in the tenth year of King Khusrō, persecution was awakened by the magi against the churches of Christ. Churches and monasteries were destroyed wherever paganism thrived. The dissolute and lukewarm believers abandoned the religion of God.[17] In contrast, the staunch, the illustrious, and the stalwart warriors from among them were empowered and stood heroically in their thanksgiving to Christ while * they endured suffering, torments, and frightening deaths for the true faith. At the time when Satan, with the pagans, hoped to diminish faith in Christ, his strength was manifested all the greater.[18] Faith in God continued to grow, seen from the outside as from the inside, and people were astonished and wondered at how great divine power was, how its deeds multiplied, and how numerous were its miracles. And in the same way that God helped those who believed in him to triumph and become great, not only during their lifetimes but also after their deaths, he glorified them in the eyes of angels and humankind. And, through them, he shamed paganism as a whole by showing [the pagans] that their gods were empty and merely a work of human hands and that they worshipped a work of their own hands.

[17] On this distinct usage of the term "fear" in Syriac, see A. Becker, "Martyrdom, Religious Difference, and 'Fear' as a Category of Piety in the Sasanian Empire: The Case of the Martyrdom of Gregory and the Martyrdom of Yazdpaneh," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2/2 (2009), 300–36.

[18] Cf. 2 Cor 12:9–10.

ܕܒܝܫܐ ܠܐ ܕܒܥܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܐܠܗ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܗ ܠܐ ܒܟܠ 2
ܙܒܢ ܠܐ ܀ ܐܡܝܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܒܫܡܗ ܡܫܬܒܚ ܠܐ
ܐܡܝܢ ܣܠܐ ܀ ܕܒܫܡܗ ܕܐܒܐ ܘܒܪܗ ܘܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ. ܡܫܒܚ ܒܟܠ
ܙܒܢ ܣܠܐ ܀ ܐܡܝܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܒܫܡܗ ܡܫܬ

The conversion and baptism of Mār Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp during the festival of Frawardīgān

3 At this time there was a man worthy of wonder, zealous for God and a vigorous warrior, who surrendered himself to a martyr's death on behalf of Christianity and faith in Christ. He exalted religion through his endurance and bravery while he suffered in the sight of angels and humankind.[22] He put to shame the vacuous error of paganism and showed [pagans] that demons[23] were nothing. This man from the Mihran family[24] belonged to the people from Bēth Raziqāyē[25] and was one of the King's nobles. His name was Pirān-Gušnasp.[26] For he received the name Mār Grigor upon his baptism.[27]

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[22] Cf. 1 Cor 4:9.

[23] This Syriac term for "demon" derives from an old Iranian term that appears in Avestan: *daeva* first referred to a "spirit" before it came to have negative connotations in Zoroastrian mythology, where it refers to malevolent, destructive forces, the false gods of the *Gāthās*.

[24] The Mihrāns were one of the seven great families of Persia's feudal aristocracy. A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Annales du Musée Guimet. Bibliothèque d'études 48; Copenhagen, 1936, 1944[2]), 103–6.

[25] Bēth Raziqāyē was a region in the Sasanian Empire situated to the south of the Caspian Sea, with Ray as its major center.

[26] Name formed by the juxtaposition of *pīr*, "aged" or "elder," and the divine name Gušnasp. Ph. Gignoux, C. Jullien, and F. Jullien, *Noms propres syriaques d'origine iranienne* (*Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, Band VII. *Iranische Namen in Semitischen Nebenüberlieferungen*, Fasz. V; Vienna, 2009), 115, n° 210.

[27] On baptismal name changes, see C. Jullien and Ph. Gignoux, "L'onomastique iranienne dans les sources syriaques. Quand les chrétiens d'Iran changent de nom (IV[e]-VII[e] s.)," *Actes du Symposium Syriacum* IX, *Parole de l'Orient* 31 (2006), 279–94; M. Debié, "Devenir chrétien dans l'Iran sassanide: la conversion à la lumière des récits hagiographiques," in H. Inglebert, S. Destephen, and B. Dumézil (eds.), *Le problème de la christianisation du monde antique* (Nanterre, 2010), 329–58.

3 ܒܗ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢ ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܗܘ ܕ

This transpired when he had glory and majesty, when he held an office and had a position of leadership – an office greater than that of governors, as, thanks to the King, he had authority over the border and affairs of the North,[29] and the King had ordered him to watch over the land of the Gurzanāyē and the Arranāyē.[30] Many thousands of cavalrymen were placed under his authority. In the thirtieth year of the reign of Kawād,[31] in the month of Adar,[32] when the festival that the magi celebrate for Satan had arrived, which they call Frawardīgān,[33] before the day itself had arrived for * Pīrān-Gušnasp to celebrate that festival for Satan, on that very night, a divine revelation came to him. In splendid light there appeared to him an angel, which stood before him and said to him:

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[29] The military function held by Grigor suggests that he exerted his authority over a vast territory; this is perhaps a reference to the function of *spāhbed*, general-in-chief of the empire. The establishment of this high military hierarchy was one of the civil administrative reforms undertaken by Khusrō.

[30] Territories surrounding the Caspian Sea, Gurgān in the south-east and Ardān to the west, south of the Caucasus range. R. Gyselen, *La géographie administrative de l'empire sassanide. Les témoignages épigraphiques en moyen-perse* (Res Orientales XXV; Bures-sur-Yvette, 2019).

[31] The reign of Kawād I began in 488 and ended in 531, with an interruption between 496 and 498 due to Zāmāsp's usurpation.

[32] March.

[33] The Zoroastrian festival of Frawardīgān was celebrated in March and devoted to the *fravašis*, the spirits of the dead. W. Malandra, "Frawardīgān," *Encyclopædia Iranica* 10/2 (Costa Mesa, 2000), 199; M. Boyce, "On the Calendar of Zoroastrian Feasts," *BSOAS* 33 (1970), 513–39. See also F. Jullien, "Contacts et échanges mazdéo-chrétiens sous Husraw I^{er}. L'apport de textes syriaques contemporains," in C. Jullien (ed.), *Husraw I^{er} – Reconstructions d'un règne. Sources et documents* (Studia Iranica. Cahier 53; Paris, 2015), 183–85.

ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܗܝܡܘܬܐ ܕܫܒܝܐ ܕܐܡ ܒܥܠܡ ܕܒܥܠܡ ܐܝܟ ܐܡ ܐܢ ܐܡ
ܕܐܡ ܠܐܝܟ ܕܟܠ ܟܡܐ ܘܐܝܟ ܕܒܗܝܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܗܝܡܘܬܐ ܕܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܐܝ ܠܟܠ
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[Fol. 74r] ܐܠܐ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ ܠܐ ܐܢ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ
ܕܐܡ ܒܐ ܕܫܠܡ ܐܢ ܕܫܠܡ[35] ܠܫܠܡ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ
.ܕܫܘܝ[36] ܡܢ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ ܕܫܘܝ ܐܢ ܕܐܡ
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[34] B ܐܢ
[35] B add. ܐܡ
[36] L^2 ܕܫܘܝ

– “Pīrān-Gušnasp, get up and go, and convert and become a Christian!”

But he did not believe that this message came from God. So, again, the next day, the same angel appeared to him for a second time and said to him:

– “Get up and go and become a Christian, as I told you!”

However, shaken by what he had seen on two occasions, he was greatly afraid; he was astounded to his very core and said:

– “What is this that has happened to me for a second time? What is it that God wants that he should visit me? Something good or something bad?”

4 The next morning, all those who were under his authority gathered and went to him to show him obeisance. All noticed that he was greatly troubled and distressed, but they did not know why, and although they waited for a while, he spoke not a word to them. Guided by divine providence one of the magi said to him:

– “Pirān-Gušnasp, are you a Christian?”

When he heard this question from the magus, he was even more astounded and understood that it was by the providence of God that it had happened. He then replied at that moment to the magus:

– “Did you say this in deceit?”

ܗܝ ܕܝ ܘܡ ܪܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܡܪ ·[38]ܐܬܠܒܒܝܢ ܠ ܫܒܩ ·[37]ܚܫܝܢܝܐ
ܘܡ ܙܐ ܘܡ ·ܡܝܒܝܢ ܪܒܐ ܒܐܒܐ ·ܐܢܐ ܡ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܟܡܐ
ܐܡܪ ܠ ܫܒܩ ·ܡ ܝܒܐ ·ܒܥܠ ܫܠܝܛ ܡܢ ܡܒܝܕ ܪܒܐ
ܐܢܐ ܒܝܬ ܚܫܝܢ ܙܕ ܕܝ ܘܡ ·ܠ ܒܝܬ ܥܡ ܪܫܡܝܐ
.ܒܝܬ ܡܫܟ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܝ ·ܪܒܐ ܐܠܗ ܐܡܪ ·ܡܢ ܡܒܝܕ
ܪܒ ܪܒܐ .ܡܢ ܡܒܝܕ ܐܡ ,ܒܗ ܒܐܐ ܐܢܐ ܕ ,ܡ ܪܒܐ
ܐܡܪ ܒܐܒܐ ܕ ܫܒܩ ܐܢܐ ,ܒܗ ܒܐܐ ܐܢܐ ܕ ,ܡ ܪܒܐ

4 ܘܐܒܐ ·ܡܫܠܚ ܒܫܡ ܐܠܗ ܐܠܗ ܐܒܪܗܡ ·ܐܝܟ ܐܡܪ ܕ ܙܕ
ܪܒܐ .ܒܪܟ ܐܠ ܒܐܡ ܐܠܗ ,ܐܡܪܝܡ .ܡܒܪܟ ,ܡܒܪܟ
ܪܒܐ [40]ܐܪܟܝ ܪܒܐ [39]ܐܝܒ ܙܕ .ܪܒܐ ,ܡ ܪܒܐ ܐܡܪ ܡܪ
ܪܒܐܒܪܟ ܠ ܪܒܝܟ ܠ ܐ ܡ ܒܝ ·ܐܠܗ ܐܠ
ܟܪ ܙܕ ܕ ܘܡ ·ܒܪ ܪܒ ܪܫܡܝܐ .ܚܫܝܢܝܐ .ܪܒܐ
ܠ ܪܒܝܟ ܕ ,ܡ ܒܝ ·ܐܒܪ ܒܪܝܒ ·ܘ ܪܒܝܟ ܠ ܪܒ ܐܡ
ܘ ܪܒܝܟ ܕ ,ܡ ܒܝ ·ܒܘܐ ,ܡ ܪܒܐ[41] ,ܡ ܪܒܐܒܪܟ
.ܐܡ ܒܝܒ ܒܪܟ .ܪܒܐ ,ܡ

[37] B ܚܫܝܢܝܐ
[38] B ܐܬܠܒܒܝܢ
[39] L ܐܒ
[40] B om.
[41] B om.

When night fell on the third day,[42] Pīrān-Gušnasp was suddenly woken in the middle of the night from sleep;[43] he saw a splendid, pleasing light illuminating the whole house and surrounding him on all sides and a man dressed in resplendent white[44] garments standing amidst that light. He addressed him by name[45] and said to him:

– "How long will you persist in Magism, the religion of your ancestors? Get up and go and become a Christian, as I said to you. Be assured and do not doubt my words. Behold, you have seen the light of Christ."

5 The angel then left him.[46] On that same night, [Pīrān-Gušnasp] called for one of the disciples [of Christ] and sent for the village priests. He told them everything he had seen and begged them to baptise him. * However, because they knew of the man's power and authority, they were overcome by great fear;[47] they feared men more than God and would not consent to baptise him. So, seeing that they were frightened of the king and the magi, Pīr-Gušnasp slipped out in secret and went to another village. He entered the church in search of its priests and asked them to baptise him. And he also told them the revelation he had had. For their part, when they heard about the wonders that God had wrought for him, they scorned all fear of the magi and valued the love of Christ more than that of human beings.

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[42] A reference to Christ's resurrection on the third day (Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19).

[43] Cf. Eph 5:14; Rom 13:11.

[44] Numerous symbolic details in this passage evoke the resurrection: a bright light (Matt 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36), men in white clothes (Matt 28:3; Luke 24:7; Mark 5:5; John 20:12) and clothes that gleam (Luke 24:4) like those of the angels on Easter morning.

[45] Cf. Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14; Isa 43:1.

[46] Cf. Luke 1:38.

[47] Cf. Acts 9:13–14.

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ܟܬܒ ܟܝܡܐ ܟܡܐ. ܡܬܒ ܟ[48]ܫܡܥܢܚܝܢ ܩܡ. ܥܠ
ܟܝܢܟ ܡܟܝ ܠ ܟ ܡ ܫܝܢ. ܟܬܒ ܡܠܟ ܝܡܢ ܟܢܝܢ
ܕܩ ܟܝܡܐ ܡܬܟܝܟ ܒܟܐ ܀ ܟܢܟܐ ܟܝܐ ܟܩܠ ܒܗ
ܟܬܡ ,ܟ ܒܢ ܝܬܟ ,ܬܟ ܟܟ. ܬ ܝܟ ܡܟ ,ܡܝܐ
ܟ ܒܝܟ ܫܢ ܗܡܬ ,ܩ ܠ ܒܐ. ܟܬܟܢܟ ܫܡ
.ܟ ܡܝܐ ܡܝ ܒ :ܟ ܠ ܟܠ ܟ ܝܬ

ܗܠ ܡ ,ܡܢܟ ܟ ܡ ܟ :ܡ ܟ ܟ ܠ ܕ ܕ 5
.ܟ ܡ ܟ ܠ ܡ ܝ ܀ ܩ ܟ ܡ ܟ ܡ
ܟܟ ܡ ܟ ܕ ܡ [Fol. 74v] .ܡ ܡ
ܠ .ܡ[50] ܡ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܡ ܡ
ܩ .ܡ[51] ܡ ܟ. ܟ ܡ ܝ ܟ ܟ
.ܟ ܡ ܟ ܟ ܡ ܠ ܡ ܡ ܟ: ܕ[52] ܡ
.ܟ ܡ ܟ ܠ ܟ. ܟ ܟ ܠ ܕ ܡ
.ܟ ܟ ܡ ܡ ܟ ;ܡ ܡ ܡ
ܠ ܟ ܩ ܡ[53] ܕ ܕ ܡ ܡ
ܕ ܟ ܡ ܟ ܟ ܡ ܟ ܟ
.ܟ

[48] B ܫܡܥܢܚܝܢ
[49] B ܟܝܢ
[50] L ܡ
[51] L ܡ
[52] B ܫܡܥܢܚܝܢ
[53] B ܟ

They rose valiantly, trusting in the power of Christ,[54] and baptised him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,[55] and they gave him communion in his body and his holy blood. He, along with them, exulted in faith in Christ.

6 After these events, he rose and returned to where he had previously been. The day arrived for him to perform the *yašt* of sin.[56] All the magi rejoiced, saying:

– "Today, there is great jubilation and a magnificent festival! And we will also rejoice through all kinds of food, we will don fancy garments, and we will be honoured with great pomp by the chief and leader of all."

After many had gathered and come from everywhere, they were standing in troops and squadrons, and those who were invited to the abominable banquet were speaking incantations[57] and waiting for the impending order. Time passed and nothing was said.

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[54] B: "divine power."

[55] Cf. Acts 2:38; 19:5; 22:16; Rom 6:3.

[56] A *yašt* is a hymn taken from the sacred texts of the Zoroastrians collected in the Avesta. Each one of the twenty one *yašts* was devoted to the praise of a deity. A. Hintze, "Yašts," *Encyclopædia Iranica* (Costa Mesa, 2014), iranicaonline.org, and A. Panaino, "References to the term *Yašt* and other Mazdean Elements in the Syriac and Greek *Martyrologia* with a Short Excursus on the Semantic Value of the Greek Verb μαγεύω," in A. Panaino and A. Piras (eds.), *Proceeding of the Fifth Conference of Iranian Studies. Ravenna 2003*, I (Milan, 2006), 167–82.

[57] Lit. "murmur," *mlḥšyn*, a Syriac expression referring to the magi's prayers. J. Bidez, and F. Cumont *Les mages hellénisés* I–II (Paris, 1938; repr. 2007), 285–86 n. 3; S. Azarnouche, "L'éducation religieuse et profane en Iran sassanide," Ph.D., École Pratique des Hautes Études V (Paris, 2012), 127–29. See also B. Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'Histoire de la Palestine au début du VII^e siècle* (Paris, 1992), II, 212–14; F. Jullien, "Contacts et échanges mazdéo-chrétiens sous Husraw I^er. L'apport de textes syriaques contemporains," 178–82.

ܡܬܬܟܢܝܢ ܘ.[58]ܐܡܪܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܡܠܟܐ ܕܐ ܒܥܝܬܟ ܕܐܒܕ
ܐܢܐ ܡܫܬܕܐ ܡܝܟܐ[59] ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܢܬ ܒܥܝ ܡܢܐ
ܕܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܟ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܟ.

6 ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ: ܐܡܪ ܐܒܐ ܠܒܪܗ
ܕܐܫܬܐ ܫܠܡܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܐܢܬ ܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܠܗܐ
ܐܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܠܗܟ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ: ܐܡܪ ܠܗ
ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܢܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܬ ܗܘ

They drew near and said to him, “Time has passed, and all of us are looking to you, and all our gazes are turned to you. Get up and perform the *yašt*, make us rejoice today with food and drink, and honour us with much pomp from the immense wealth that Ohrmazd has given you:[60] he has appointed you as chief and leader of us all.”

However, Pīr-Gušnasp, to whom the name Mār Grigor had been given at baptism, when he heard what they had said, exclaimed in a loud voice before them all that he had disavowed Ohrmazd as well as wealth and power while he himself no longer had either wealth no office: *

– “I am a Christian and I worship our Lord Jesus Christ, and I no longer serve fire.”[61]

When they heard this, they were all astonished and covered their heads[62]. They questioned him, saying:

– “Has a demon perhaps taken possession of you?”

He then replied to them a second time, saying:

– “In truth, until now, I served the demons and fulfilled their will in all their despicable deeds, because Ohrmazd is a demon and not a god. But now, I am a Christian and I fear the Lord God of Heaven, he who made heaven, earth, and everything in them.”[63]

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[60] Ohrmazd, another name for Ahura Mazdā, supreme Zoroastrian deity.

[61] B: “to the demons.”

[62] In shame. Cf. Jer 14:3–4; Est 6:12.

[63] This clause has several parallels in biblical confessional statements (e.g., Acts 4:24, 14:15; Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6; Ps 133 [134]:3).

ܫܘܬܐ ܕܡ ܡܝܡ ܕܠ ܠܚܐ ܕܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܫܘܝ ܕܐ ܡܝܟܐ ܐܝܟ
ܫܟܝܟܐ ܫܘܐ ܠ ܫܡ ܃ ܐܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܡ ܠܐ ܐܠ ܫܘܝ ܃ ܐܠܗ ܠܐ
ܐܡܐ ܫܝ ܫܝܐ ܫܡ ܟܐ ܠ ܐܢ ܫܝ ܫܘܝ ܫܘܝ ܫܘܝ ܫܘ
ܐܡܐ ܫܝ ܫܝ ܫܡ ܟܐ ܠ ܐܢ ܫܝ ܫܘܝ ܫܘܝ ܫܘ
ܐ ܐ ܐ

When this was affirmed before them, they all became as agitated as the prophets of Baal[68] and their feast turned to lamentation. They gathered up dust and strewed it upon their own heads. They begged and told him to abandon such thoughts. He then spoke to them for a third time:

– "Not only will you not persuade me with gentle words, but for the sake of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I will also go so far as to surrender my body to the sword, fire, and various other forms of execution."[69]

As soon as they saw that he would not listen to them, they all rose up and leaving him dispersed, ashamed and stricken by hunger and thirst. Therefore, the demons and their servants were beaten by the Christian athlete,[70] who from the moment that he was anointed for baptism made Satan and his angels tremble by means of the sharp arrows of his words.

First imprisonment and release

7 Afterwards they informed the King that Pīr-Gušnasp had abandoned the religion of Magism and become a Christian. Upon hearing the news, the King was greatly displeased. The notables of the kingdom then said to the King:

– "This man is as great and renowned as one of us; from time immemorial his family has adhered to the religion of the King. If we leave him thus, our entire religion will come to an end and all the magi will become Christians!"

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[68] A reference to the confrontation between the Prophets of Baal and Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18:20–40).

[69] This is contextually improbable, because Zoroastrians cannot sully fire, which is sacred. This rather reflects a martyrological *topos*: the reference to Dan 3 in the next paragraph could explain the hagiographer's choice here.

[70] Cf. 1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 2:5.

ܒܬܪ ܗܘ ܕܡܠܟ ܐܪܒܝܢ ܀ ܘܐܡ ܕܡܒܠ ܒܝܕܗ ܕܐ ܕ
ܥܒܕ ܠܥܒܕ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܒܕܒܕ ܒܘܡ ܒܒܡܒܝܥ. ܗܠܟ
ܟܬܒ ܠܟ ܒܒܕ ܀ ܦܝܒܥ ܠ ܘܘ ܡܡܒܒ. ܕܡܬ[71] ܐܠܒ
ܗܠܒ ܐܡܠ ܠ. ܕܡܠ ܒܒ ܡܒܒ ܒܠܒ ܐ ܘ. ܘܡ ܗܗ
ܥܠܠ ܕܡܠ ܟܒ ܗܠ ܐ. ܠ ܕܒܗ ܡܒܒ ܟܒܒ
ܒܒ ܕܡܠ ܘܒܒ ܒܒ ܐ ܀ ܒܒ ܒܒ ܒܒ ܐ ܒ
ܒ ܕܡܠ ܘܒܒ ܒ ܐ. ܕܡ ܒܒ ܠ ܘܘ ܐ ܒ ܀
ܒ ܕ ܒ ܒ ܒ

A decree was then issued by the King that his wealth should be confiscated as well as his office and that he be thrown into a dark pit,[75] but that he be provided with water to keep him alive. When Mār Grigor learned of this decree, he knew tremendous joy. He praised God and said:

– "I thank you, * Christ, for not leaving me in the religion of the evil demons.[76] Rather, you took pity on me in your grace and your mercy and accepted me among your Christian sheep. You have given me this great gift of suffering for your holy name."[77]

He remained in that pit for three years,[78] during which time he was strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit and attended to by assemblies of angels.[79] For all those years, both day and night, the pit was filled with a celestial light,[80] and he found his joy in hymns of the Holy Spirit.[81] While he seemed to be in this world, his thoughts had already been transported to the kingdom of heaven. And with the hidden eyes of his soul he saw our Lord Christ sitting on the throne of his glory in the kingdom of heaven.[82] And he heard a pleasant voice that comforted him and said:

– "Do not fear, Grigor, I am with you. It will be for you that you shall endure death for my name[83] and you will join the choirs of the apostles and holy martyrs."

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[75] Cf. Dan 6:17. The parallel with this biblical episode is, moreover, made explicit in the next paragraph (§ 8). The pit also evokes other characters from the Old Testament, especially Jeremiah (Jer 38:6) and Joseph (Gen 37:24).

[76] B: "the religion of my fathers' demons."

[77] Cf. Acts 5:41; cf. Matt 5:11–12; Phil 1:29; 1 Pet 4:14.

[78] This is possibly a symbolic number referring to Jonah (2:1) and especially Christ (Matt 12:39–40).

[79] Cf. Matt 4:11; Luke 22:43.

[80] This radiance recalls the light of glory (*xvarnah*) in Zoroastrianism.

[81] Cf. Eph 5:19. This could also be a reference to the Psalter.

[82] Cf. Acts 7:55.

[83] Cf. Acts 23:11; Acts 9:16.

ܐܡܠܠܐ ܡܝܗܒ ܠܥܒܕܗ ܗܠܟ ܟܕ ܠܐ ܫܡܥ ܥܠ ܡܕ
ܕܐ ܟܡ. ܥܒ ܐܠ ܗܠܟ ܫܟ[84]ܠ ܐܠܗܐ. ܗܒܠ ܫܒܚ ܗܒܗ
ܫܒܥ. ܗܒܝ ܗܒܡ ,ܐ. ܡܒܪܟ ܗܡ ܒܒܥ ܒ: ܐܒܚ ,ܐ
ܒܒܥ ܗܒ. ܫܒܥ [Fol. 75v] ܠ ܗܡ ܗܒܟ. ܐܒܗ ܗܠܟ
ܒܗܒܒ ,ܡܗ ܗܡ .[85]ܫܒ ܫܒܒ ܗܒܠ ,ܡ
ܗ ܒܡ. ܐܠܟ ܐܒ ܒܠ: ܗܒܝ ܗܒܡ ܗ
ܫܒ ܡ ܒ ܗ. ܫܒ ܐܒ ܒ ܒ: ܗܒܝ ܗܒܡ
ܗ ܡ ܐ ܗ. ܫܒ ܐ ܒ ܒ ܗ ܐ ܗ ܐ ܗ ܐ

Roman-Persian war

8 And once the magi had seen that his mind was not weakened and that his body was not harmed, but that, on the contrary, day after day, he grew stronger in faith in Christ, the very strength that had brought Daniel out of the lions' den[87] presently troubled the King and greatly frightened him when he heard about all the many signs that God had performed for the glorious martyr. At once he ordered that he be taken out of the pit and reinstated to all his former dignity. Then a long while went by during which Mār Grigor was in his position of honor and his office and he made angels and human beings wonder by his divine manner of life. He was exalted and glorified more than any other man for the true faith in Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit filled him with the ability to recite the whole of the Holy Scriptures, although he had no knowledge of Scriptures.[88]

Following these events, hostilities broke out between the Persians and the Romans. Both empires were disrupted by * their conflict with one another. All the Roman troops gathered and set off to fight near Gurzān and Arrān.[89] A unit of soldiers[90] sallied forth to engage the Romans. Mār Grigor was general[91] of the Persian unit.

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[87] Dan 6:2–29.

[88] Cf. Matt 10:19–20. Zoroastrian religious culture maintained a focus on oral learning of sacred texts. This passage suggests that he had not been trained in the knowledge of the Bible and thus has miraculously received biblical literacy.

[89] Cf. § 3 and n. 14.

[90] B: "the troop of the Persians."

[91] Equivalent to an *Ērān spāhbed*; R. Gyselen found that *spāhbeds* were often from the Mihrān clan (as in Grigor's case) and that under Khusrō I they governed vast territories in the north of the empire, particularly toward Ādurbādagān (Azerbaijan). Two seals of these high figures have been found (R. Gyselen, *The Four Generals of the Sasanian Empire*, seals 4a et 4b).

8 ܕܠܡܗܝܡܢ ܠܐ ܡܝܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܚܝܐ ܐܠܐ ܡܫܬܝ ܫܪܒܬܐ ܕܫܪܒܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐ ܕܐ ܕܠܐ
ܕܫܪܒܬ ܒܗܠ ܫܒܥܬܝܡ ܫܢ ܠܡܗܝܡܢ ܒܗ ܒܐ ܕܐ ܒܐ ܕܠܐ
ܒܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܘܫܒܥܬܝܡ ܫܢ ܠܡܫܬܝ ܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܟ
ܠܐ ܫܒܥ ܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܘܫܒܥܬܝܡ ܫܢ ܠܡܫܬܝ ܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܟ
ܒܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܘܫܒܥܬܝܡ ܫܢ ܠܡܫܬܝ ܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܟ
ܐܝܟ ܫܒܥ ܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܘܫܒܥܬܝܡ ܫܢ ܠܡܫܬܝ ܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܟ
ܐܝܟ

However, due to the great number of units and the strength of the Romans, the Persians were defeated by the Romans. A large number were killed and the rest were taken captive. The general, Grigor, was also deported with them and taken before the Caesar, the Emperor of the Romans.[95] When the Emperor heard about the power and authority the man held in the Persian Empire, and especially that he was a Christian, he ordered that he be granted many gifts, as well as an office higher even than his previous one.

9 After a long time God made peace between both kingdoms. In the fortieth year,[96] Khusrō became king, and in the third year of his reign, he ordered that an emissary go to the Emperor of the Romans so that peace might abound between both kingdoms.[97] Zabargān,[98] one of the nobles of the kingdom, was chosen and sent. When he arrived, he was received by Caesar, the Emperor of the Romans, with much joy. Then he asked to return to his country. He asked the Emperor of the Romans whether Mār Grigor could go with him to the land of the Persians. However, in this the Emperor was not swayed, first due to the man's fortitude in battle and then because he knew the magi would not allow a man of such importance to remain Christian in the land of the Persians; he feared that, perhaps afflicted with suffering and afflictions, he would renounce faith in Christ.

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[95] Justinian (527–65).

[96] This is probably a reference to the end of the reign of Khusrō's father, Kawād I, who died in 531 in his forty-first year as king.

[97] This peace treaty of indefinite duration was in fact signed in 532; it put an end to the Iberian War and was called "Perpetual Peace." Cf. G. Greatrex and S.N.C. Lieu *The Roman Eastern Frontier and the Persian Wars (AD 363–630)* II. *A Narrative Sourcebook* (London, 2002).

[98] On this name, the etymology of which is uncertain, see Ph. Gignoux, C. Jullien, and F. Jullien, *Noms propres syriaques d'origine iranienne*, 148, n° 460.

ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܐܢܬ ܐܬܝܬ[99] ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܬܝܬ ܠܟ ܒܫܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܕܐܬ ܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܕܐܬܝ

However, Mār Grigor asked to return to his country because of the Romans' blasphemy regarding the divine nature and the lack of truth in of their belief in the corporeal nature of our Lord Jesus Christ.[106] So he [the Emperor] told Zabargān to make an agreement before God that nobody would harm him because of his Christianity when he returned to the country of his ancestors. He rose up and consented with him regarding everything. Then, once this provision was settled between them, * they established God as an arbitrator between the two of them.

Once the emissary had set off and arrived at Nisibis, the city of the Persians, Grigor was provided with thirty cavalrymen, while he trusted in the divine power that had been with him from the beginning. He left, joined the emissary in the city of Nisibis, and went with him to the King. Entering his presence, he was received by the King with great joy. Zabargān told the King of the agreement he had made with Gregory before God regarding his Christianity. Instantly, the King issued an order; he honoured [Grigor] with great favours and granted him a position even more important than his previous one; he gave him authority over the region where he had been before.

Continuing persecution and torture. Debate with Zoroastrians

10 After a long time, when Satan noticed that in all these battles he could not prevail over this righteous man, but that, on the contrary, day by day he was growing more exalted and glorified, he rallied all his forces and moved the magi with jealousy of the righteous one.[107] They said:

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[106] This refers to the Christological controversy between East Syrians and Chalcedonians regarding the person of Jesus, both man and God.

[107] "Jealousy" or "envy" is the most common emotion associated with Satan. It both inspires him and serves as his own device for manipulating human action.

ܠܐ ܗܘܝܢ ܚܕܐ ܕ[108]ܥܡ ܟܬ ܗܘ ܕܐ ܒܝ ܕܝ ܐܡ
ܥܡܝܢ ܠܗ ܗܘ ܗܘ ܟܬ ܠܗ ܟܬܒܘܗܝ ܕܡܒܪܟ
ܡ ܗܘ ܥ ܟܬ ܒܗ ܕܐ ܗܘ ܡܒܪܟ ܕܡܒܪܟ
ܠܐ ܗܘ ܡ ܟ[109]ܥ ܗܘ ܥܡ ܟܬ ܡ ܟ ܕ ܠ
ܟ ܗܡ ܗ ,ܡ ܗ ܟ ܗ ܟ ܗ ܟ ܗ ܟ ܗ ܟ ܗ
ܥ ,ܐ ܒ ܒ ܒ

– "Is it not a great infamy for the religion of the magi that a man as important as this, from the Mirhān family, servants of the house of Ohrmazd from time immemorial, should now be a servant of Christ? And that he be honoured by the King with all this magnificence?"

When the King heard these things he wanted to satisfy the will of the armies of [Satan] and ordered that he be stripped of his wealth and power and cast into hard chains.

However, seeing the will of the wondrous man, who was more powerful than steel and whose love for God was firmer than that of all of humanity, whose constancy was triumphing over all the torments and tortures of the Devil's wiles, such that he astonished angels and human beings and demonstrated the power of heroism possessed by human nature, which surpassed the nature of spiritual beings when they so wanted, in such a way that it made the just in every generation of times past renowned and, through them, condemned Satan. So also in these later times, when the true religion had grown cool and the fame * of the glorious deeds of the holy martyrs had been erased from the world, and as people heard about their glorious deeds only by listening to their stories, presently, God also wanted, in this later generation, by the death of Mār Grigor, the glorious martyr, to convert humanity to knowledge of himself, to awaken it from the weight of the sin in which they were lying, to convert all of creation to God, the creator of everything, and to reveal to it his love for God and humankind. And wherever the name of Christ is celebrated, so, too, shall the name of Mār Grigor the martyr be celebrated.

ܟܝ ܟܝܪܟ ܀ ܟܬܒܟ ܟܡܠܙ ܟܝ ܡ ܘܡ ܟܝܙ. ܦܝܡ ܕ ܒܘܕ ܟܬܠ ܟܡ ܐܡܟ ܒܘܕ ܟܡܡܐ ܟ ܟܡ ܡܡ ܐ ܡܟ ܀ ܐܡܒܘ ܢܝܒܘ ܡ ܟ ܡ ܕ ܡ ܟ ܡ ܟ ܡ ܟ

11 For all these reasons, God put the armor[122] of the Holy Spirit on him and allowed Satan to do battle with him. When the saint sensed Satan's assault against himself, [God][123] encouraged his mind and prepared his body to valiantly endure blows and travails, and he offered his soul consolation: the words of the Holy Scriptures. After his wealth and power – that which is worldly – had been taken from him, he was cast into hard chains and against iron columns. However, as that proved useless, he was abandoned for many days in a dark pit. This did not result in any harm for him; on the contrary, he was even further strengthened in his body and his soul. And the power of our Lord Jesus Christ was manifested even more in him – that glory that had been there from the beginning.[124] Night and day, the guards heard his voice as he recited the psalms of the blessed David.[125] When the magi saw that they were not doing him any harm, they reflected and said:

– "What are we to do with this man who has overcome the entire religion of Magism? And what is this strength that the religion of Christianity has?[126] For any man who places his trust in he whom they call Christ no longer cares at all for this world nor does he fear the chains of death." They said: "It is a great shame for us that this man be left alive." *

They took Grigor from the pit and ordered iniquitous men to strike the saint with blows that brought him close to death, but even after being struck for a long time, he did not die. They had an iron helmet heated and they placed it on his head so that he would die instantly. But Christ did not let him die then; on the contrary, he kept him alive and [Grigor] did not die.

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[122] Cf. Eph 6:11

[123] The subject is unclear: it could be God or Grigor.

[124] B: "by a splendid light – that which was from the beginning."

[125] Cf. Acts 16:25.

[126] B: "of the Christians."

11 ܡܬܒܪ ܟܬܒܐ ܫܘܝܐ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ ܡܬܒܠ ܒܡܠܟ ܡܠܟ ܠܟ
ܟܠܗ ܟܒܝܕ ܟܬܒ ܒܟ ܕܝ ܕ. ܡܟܐ ܒܝܕ ܟܠܗ
ܟܬܠܟ ܟܗܝܡ ܠܡܟܒܠ. ܡܝܟ ܒܠܐ ܡܫܒ ܒܕ ܡܠܟܠ.
ܒܝ ܟܐ ܟܬܒ ܟܒܝ ܟܠ ܡܒܠ ܟܒܝ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ
ܟܬܠܡܟ ,ܡܟܒܝ ܡܠܟ ܟܠ ܕܒ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ
ܟ ܒܟ ܒܝ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ
ܡܫܒ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ
ܟ ܒܟ ܒܝ ,ܡܝܟ ܒܠ ܡܫܒ

The torturers arrived but they were tortured themselves in their anger.[138] Their aim was unfulfilled. When the torturers saw that they were not doing him any harm – better still, he was laughing, rejoicing and as happy as though he were at a banquet with wine – they were astonished and their enmity turned to pity; the torturers and inmates of the prison cried in unison:

– "Great is the God of Grigor and there is no God but him!"[139]

Then they threw themselves upon him and they all kissed him, and with pieces of cloth, they turned to the blood that his wounds were exuding for a means of preserving their own lives. Many of them confessed Christ and became Christians.

12 As for the saint, amidst all these torments, his mind was not weakened in the least, but he continuously called upon Christ for his aid and said:

– "Help me, Lord, in these torments that I endure for your holy name from these pagan worshippers of visible creatures."

He was then in that place for seven years, as they subjected him sometimes to blows, sometimes to injuries, sometimes to hunger, sometimes to thirst, sometimes to hard chains and iron columns.

[138] This is a *topos* in martyrologies: the executioner is tortured by his own wrath.

[139] This expression, which has a biblical background (e.g., Ex 20:3; Isa 45:5; Hos 13:4; cf. Acts 4:12), seems to be an early cognate form of the Muslim *shahada*: "There is no god but God."

ܡܠܟܐ ܕܠܐ ܀ ܕܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܕܡܫܟܚܝܢ[140] ܐܢܝܫܝܢ ܀ ܕܫܒܩ ܐܒܝ
ܕܠܐ ܀ ܒܪ ܠܡ ܐܡܪ ܕܠ ܕܫܒܩ ܐܡ ܐܡ ܒܪ. ܐܝ[141] ܕܡܫܟ
ܕܟ ܕܫܡܥ ܐܒܐ ܀ ܐܫܬ ܟܘܬܐ ܕܡܫܟܚ ܫܡ ܕܫܘ ܐܝܐ ܫܟ
ܕܫܒܩ ܠܐ ܫܬ ܐܒܐ. ܟܬܒ ܠܡܫܟܚܢܝܬ ܒܒܡܫܟܚ
ܒܢ ܐܒܫܐ ܡܠܟ ܩܡ ܒܐ. ܐܫܬ ܕܫܒܩ ܒܪ ܒܪ
ܕܡܫ ܠ ܐܡܐ ܡܕܒܪ[142]. ܐܒܐ ܐܝ ܐܡ ܕܠ
ܫܡ ܕܫܒܩ ܠ ܐܡܐ ܠܡܒܐ ܀ ܐܒܫ ܩܡ ܡܒܐ ܐܫ
ܐܡܐ ܕܫܟܒ ܐܒܐ ܡܠܟ ܡܫܒܚ ܕܫܒܩ.

12 ܒܐ ܐܡ ܒܪ ܐܫ ܒܐ ܕ ܀ ܕܫܒܩ ܡܠܟ ܠܡ ܕܫܒ
ܐܒ ܒܫܒܩ. ܐܒܫ ܒܫܒ ܕ ܐܒ ܫܒܫܠ ܟܫܟ ܒܫܒܩ ܕܠ
ܕܫܩ ܡ ܕܠ ܐܒ ܐܡܡ ܕܫܒ ܫܒ ܠܐ ܀ ܕܫܠܩ ܠܡ
ܒ. ܫܩ ܡܩ ܕܐ ܒܐ ܩܡ ܡ ܒ ܐܡ. ܫܒܐ ܕܫܒ ܐ
ܕ ܫܩ ܡ ܕ ܫ ܕ ܫ ܕ ܫ

After he was in prison a long time and they saw that he was not dying, they prevented him from receiving nourishment and drinking water, and he was not sent what he needed, not even anything from his family,[143] and the guards gave him nothing. The saint bowed down before God and he made a spring of water burst forth and by it he was provided with food and water,[144] because the place where he was imprisoned had no water.

Resumption of hostilities with the Romans and war against the Huns

13 Then, after these events, a new war broke out between the Romans and the Persians. * In the ninth year of the reign of King Khusrō, he left with his armies and seized many towns.[145] He mounted an offensive against Antioch in Syria, devastated it and burnt it with fire. And he deported the people there.[146] Then he pillaged its wealth and possessions and left, he and his armies, and returned to his country victorious.

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[143] Help with clothing, bedding, and food from their families was essential for the prisoners' subsistence, as is suggested in several Persian martyr acts: *Acts of Joseph, Aqebšema and Aitallaha* (*AMS* II.370), the *Acts of Anahid* in the Mār Pethion cycle (*AMS* II.593) and the *History of the Forty Martyrs* (*AMS* II.336). See C. Jullien, "Peines et supplices dans les *Actes des martyrs persans* et droit sassanide: nouvelles prospections," *Studia Iranica* 33/2 (2004), 253–54.

[144] These details evoke both the gift of manna in the desert and the water that surges from the rock to quench the thirst of the Hebrews (Ex 16:1–36; 17:5–6). Prison miracles occur in related texts, e.g., Mihr-Šābuhr is not attacked by the snake hidden in his cell (*AMS* II.538); Pethion is permitted neither sustenance nor visitors but survives nonetheless (ed. J. Corluy, "Historia S. Mar Pethion martyris," *Analecta Bollandiana* 7 [1888], 30; *AMS* II.593).

[145] In 540, Khusrō I broke the peace and invaded Mesopotamia and Syria.

[146] Most of these populations were settled near Seleucia-Ctesiphon in Weh-Andiyok-Khusrō, "Khusrō's Better Antioch," as testified, for instance, by Procopius, *Persian Wars* II, 14, 1.

ܡܛܠ ܗܠ ܀ ܒܫܡ ܡܢ ܐܡܐ ܀ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܒܗ ܡܕܝ ܐܡ ܐܟܐ ܒܝ ܐܒܐ ܒܝ ܡ ܐܒܫܪ ܐܡ ܗܠ ܡܕܝ ܐܒܕ ܐܝܟ ܐܒܐ ܐܒܫܪܐ ܐܒܠܐ ܐܒܐ ܐܒܫܪ ܐܡܠ ܒܗ ܠܟ ܀ ܐܕܝܪ ܒܝ ܐܡ .ܡ[147]ܐܒܐ ܐܝܟܐ ܐܠ ܀ ܡܒܗ ܐܒܐ ܐܡܐ ܐܒܝܒܒܗ .ܐܒܫ ܐܕܟ ܡ ܒܒܐ ܗܒ ܒܗ ܐܡܐ ܐܝܒܝ ܀ ܐܡܐ ܐܒܐ ܐܝܒܝ ܐܒܐ ܒܠܟ .[148]ܐܒܫܒܐ ..ܐܒܫ

13 ܐܡܝܫ ܒܟ ܐܒܡܐܡܬ ܐܒܝܗ ܒܐܐ ܐܡܐ ܀ ܡܠܡ ܒܝ ܐܒܗ ܟܡ ܐܡ ܠܝܐ ܀ ܐܒܠܒ ܐܝܡܐܒܐ ܡܒܐܒܠܒ ܒܒܐ ܒܒܒܐ [Fol. 78r] ܐܒܠܡܝ ܠܒ ܡܠܡܐ .ܐܒܝܒܟܡ ܐܒܝܒܫ ܒܒܐ ܀ ܡܒܫܠܡܐ .ܡܒ ܐܒܝ ܫܒ [149]ܐܒܒܐ .ܐܝܐܒ ܡܡܐܐ ܡܒܝܐ ܀ ܐܝܐܡ ܡܝܒܐ ܒܟܠ ܀ ܡܒܫܠܡܐ ܐܡ ܠܒܐ .ܒ ܡܡܡܐ .[150]ܡܝܒܐܠܐ ..ܐܒܒ ܐܒܐܒ

[147] L ܒܡ
[148] L ܒ above the line
[149] L ܐܒܐ
[150] B ܡܝܒܐܒ

But the following year, he was terrified to go and fight in the land of the Huns.[151] After he had arrived at the place where the saint was held prisoner, Mihrān, son of Grigor's uncle, presented himself before the King and said:

– "It is a great dishonour for us that someone from our family has become a Christian."

When the King heard this, he ordered that Grigor be brought before him. He said to him:

– "If you abandon this Christian religion, I will make you chief over all the King's dignitaries and I will bestow immense wealth upon you."

Mār Grigor then told him:

– "There is no wealth greater than [God's] religion and the power that lasts forever belongs to him in the kingdom of heaven. Your wealth and your power are yours for a time and then death will make it pass away and destroy it. As for me, I will not deny Christ, because he is the master and judge of all humankind."

Transfer to Dastgerd d-Bēth Balān. Wonders and torments

14 When the King heard this, he wondered at his wisdom and valour and said to [the magi]:

– "Choose someone wise from among all the magi and let him teach [Grigor] how great the religion of Magism is and he will quickly abandon Christianity and turn to the religion of the magi."

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[151] The form *hngryʾ* is a hapax; in general, Huns is *hwnyʾ* / *hnyʾ*. Cf. M. Dickens and C. Jullien, "Syriac Sources," in D. Balogh (ed.), *Hunnic Peoples in Central and South Asia. Sources for their Origin and History* (Groningen, 2020), 173–91. The political context under Khusro I makes clear that *hngryʾ* refers to the Huns who were defeated on the eastern frontier (cf. below § 14 where the author mentions the victory of the Persian King against the Huns).

ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ ܕܫܪܝ ܒܝ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܒܗ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܘܥܕ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܠܝ ܒܗ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܒܗ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܠܐ ܒܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ ܕܒܝܕܗ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܘܟܝܢܐ ܘܟܝܢ

Then the great *mowpeṭa*[153] stood before the King and said:

– "Deliver him to me and I will teach him!"

Once he was delivered to him, every day, he repeated that erroneous lesson of his before him, but, thanks to the wisdom God gave him, by his own words the holy Mār Grigor refuted his religion, which was a lie and the teaching of the demons. When the *mowpeṭa* understood that he would get no further and that he was not able to turn the saint from the true faith, the *rad*[154] presented himself before the King, as well as the *mowpeṭa* of Bēth Aramāyē,[155] and they said that no one in the world could turn * Grigor from the religion of the Christians. So he ordered that he be delivered to the royal warden of prisoners. Then, when the war against the Huns had ended, and the King had returned victorious[156] and then had gone to Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē, Mār Grigor went with him, although still in chains. An order stipulated that he be kept in a village called Dastgerd[157] d-Bēth Balān, situated to the east of Ctesiphon.

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[153] Syriac *mowpeṭa* (*mwhpṭ'*), close to the Middle Persian *mgwpty*, is a variation of *mowbed* (*mwbd*). The primary role of this Zoroastrian cleric was to ensure the maintenance of Mazdean orthodoxy and to perform the *Yasna* ritual. This priestly function may have been hereditary.

[154] On this function, see Ph. Gignoux, "Titres et fonctions sasanides d'après les sources syriaques hagiographiques," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 28/1–4 (1983), 200–2.

[155] The Bēth Aramāyē corresponds to the ecclesiastical province of Babylonia, central Mesopotamia, Asūrestān in the Sasanian civil administration. The "*mowpeṭa* of Bēth Aramāyē" had this provincial jurisdiction subject to him (cf. Ph. Gignoux, "Titres et fonctions sasanides d'après les sources syriaques hagiographiques," 197–99).

[156] This refers to the temporary victory won by the Persians in 541 (D. Balogh [ed.], *Hunnic Peoples in Central and South Asia. Sources for their Origin and History*, 269–70).

[157] The Syriac term is *zqrt'*, which perhaps represents *dastgerd*, "domain."

ל [158]ܡܫܬܠܚ .ܝܟܪܐ ܪܟܠ ܒܗ ܪܟ ܪܟܫܡܐ ܒܐ ܡܢܡ
ܡ ܪܐܡ ܪܝܐ :ܡ [159]ܡܫܬܠܚ ܡ ܟܐ .ܡ ܪܢ ܟܠ ܪܟ ܪܟ
ܝܟ ܡ ܪܥܒ ܪܝܐ .ܡܠ ܪܟܫܡܐ ܒ ܪܟܠ ܒܐ ܠ ,ܡܫܒ
ܪܝܒ ܡܠ ,ܡܟܠ ܟܐ .ܪܡܠ ܡ ܫܡ ܪܟܫܒ ܟܐ :ܝܟܪܝ
ܫܒ ܡ ܒ .ܪܒܐ ܒܐ ܪܟܠ ܡܟ ܪܟܠ ܡܟ ܪܐܡ
ܟܐ ܪܥܒ ,ܡܫܟܫ ܫܟ ܪܟ :ܒܝ ܝܟ ܪܟ ܪܟܫܡܐ
ܪܟ ܒܐ ܪܟ ܟܪ ܪܟܫܡ ܝ ܐ :ܪܝ ܪܟܫ
ܡ [Fol. 78v] ܫܡ ܫܟ ܪܟ ܒܪ .[160]ܡ
ܝ ,ܡܫܬܠ :ܒܐ ܡ .[161]ܪܟܫ ܪܟ ܟ ܝ
ܒܐ :ܪ ܒ ܪ ܪ ܪ .ܪ ܪ ܪ
.ܪ ܪ ܪ ܪ [162]ܪ ܡ ܪ :ܪ ܪ
ܪ [163]ܫ ,ܝ ܪ ܪ .ܪ ܪ
ܟ ܡ .ܪ ܪ ܪ ܪ ܪ

[158] B ,ܡܫܬܠ
[159] B ܡܫܬ
[160] B ܝܟ
[161] B ܪܟܫ
[162] B ܪ
[163] B add. ܫ

But when news of the righteous one came to be heard, many people gathered to go and see the wondrous man. So Christ put goodwill in the King's heart and he ordered that the prison door be opened before anyone who wished to see him.

15 He stayed in this prison from Tešri II[164] until the time of the King's departure.[165] At that time God performed this miracle through him: whosoever was incarcerated with him in the prison and saw his love, his wellbeing, and the fear of God within him – which was transcending human nature – and heard from him the teaching of the words of the Holy Scriptures that person's opinion was quickly changed over to the true faith.[166] When they[167] were subjected to blows and torture, they proclaimed and said:

– "We are Christians and we will not deny Christ, for he who is the true God, and moreover there is no other God but he."

There was an important man, well-known in the kingdom, who was a prisoner alongside the saint. He was from the land of the Raziqāyē.[168] After he saw his divine manner of life and heard his teaching he renounced the religion of Magism and acknowledged Christ our Lord. Blows and injuries were inflicted upon him, leaving him close to death.

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[164] October.

[165] This reference to the "King's departure" may refer to the spring season: Sasanian kings would leave their residence in Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the spring, either for battle or to summer in cooler regions.

[166] B: "to faith in Christ."

[167] I.e., the other prisoners.

[168] The land of the Raziqāyē corresponds with the Bēth Raziqāyē of the East Syrian ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the Sasanian civil province of Ray with its capital of the same name (ancient Rhagae).

ܗܘ ܕ ܒܝܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܪ ܓܪܓܘܪ ܦܝܪܐܢ ܓܘܫܢܣܦ ܕܒܥܐ ܠܡܫܒܚ ܠܗ ܘܠܡܫܬܒܚ ܒܫܡܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܣܠܐ ܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ

However, he resisted valiantly and did not deny Christ. The King ordered that his ears and nostrils be cut off.[175] And so it was done, yet he was even stronger in the faith in Christ, and when no one knew what else to do to him, the King ordered that he be taken out of prison. They pardoned that first transgression and gave him back his position of honor even despite him being Christian.[176]

16 Because of what had happened with this man, Mār Grigor * was subjected to a great many torments. After many torments, he was locked in isolation in a cell, the door of which was blocked with mud and bricks. He stayed there seven days, without food or water. After seven days, the warden of the prison thought he was dead. He opened the door and discovered him lying face down praying to God. After he had lifted him up, many people entered and saw his face was like the face of an angel[177] and all were astonished at the power of God. When the warden of the prison saw that everything was useless, as, on the contrary, the righteous man grew stronger day by day and by him the religion [of God] was even more renowned, his anger flared hot. When night fell, Satan entered into him[178] and he approached the saint to kill him.

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[175] This torture is an abbreviated form of "the nine deaths," a Persian torment which consisted in severing all the limbs of the condemned at the joints. In the Persian martyr acts this punishment is often reserved for converts from Zoroastrianism (e.g., Jacob Intercisus, *AMS* II.539–58; Pērōz, *AMS* IV.262; Jacob the Notary, *AMS* IV.197; and ʿAwira in *Yazd-panāh* § 12). On the Persian martyrs under Wahrām V, see C. Jullien, and F. Jullien (eds.), *Les textes migrateurs. Transmissions interculturelles entre Orient et Occident* (Subsidia Hagiographica 100; Bruxelles, *forthcoming*).

[176] Lit. "in his Christianity."

[177] Acts 6:14.

[178] Cf. John 13:27.

ܡܐܪ ܒܪܝܫܐ ܕܟܠ ܙܒܢ ܕܫܠܡ ܒܥܝ ܠܡܐ ܒܪܝܬ ܒܪ
ܥܒܕܘܗܝ ܠܡܐ ܒܪܝܬ ܒܥܝ ܕܐܡ ܠܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܡܐ
ܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܥܒܕ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܡܪ
ܡܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܥܒܕ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܡܪ

16 [Fol. 79r] ܐܟܝܪ ܐܟܠ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܟܐ ܕܡܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܟܐ
ܥܒܕ ܡܐܪ ܕܐܡ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܟܐ ܕܡܐ ܡܢ ܡܠܟܐ
ܠܡܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܬܐ ܡܟܝܟ ܡܐܡܪ ܕܐܡ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ
ܐܡܪ ܐܬܐ ܡܟܝܟ ܡܐܡܪ ܕܐܡ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܐܡܪ
ܐܡܪ ܐܬ ܕܡ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܟܝܪ ܒܥܐ ܠܐ ܒܢܝ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ
ܐܡܪ ܐܬ ܕܡ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܟܝܪ ܒܥܐ ܠܐ ܒܢܝ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ
ܐܡܪ ܐܬ ܕܡ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܟܝܪ ܒܥܐ ܠܐ ܒܢܝ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ

[179] ܐܡ ܐܡܪ ܐܬ ܕܡ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܟܝܪ ܒܥܐ ܠܐ ܒܢܝ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ

[179] L add. ܐܡ

From the evening until the next morning, he ceaselessly dealt him hard blows of various sorts, with [Grigor's] hands being tied behind his legs at the knees, bonds around his feet, chains around his neck, to such an extent that even his bones were exposed through his flesh. All of his wounds were running with blood and water.[180] However, the saint had his eyes lifted to the heavens and called out to Christ to help him and come to his aid. On that night, the place of incarceration became a place of spectacle for angels and humankind,[181] gathered and standing in great wonder at the sight of a mortal human being fighting against death and vanquishing it. All the people who were around the prison that night kept watch, in prayer and supplication, asking and praying that God strengthen the saint in his struggle.

17 When day broke and it was morning, they gathered and went to him from everywhere; they saw that his face radiated the love of God and the Holy Spirit, like the face of an angel. After these believers saw all these ineffable miracles and knew how great the power of Christ was, they started to glorify and praise the divine nature for how great its deeds are and how many are its wonders, and that it causes those who believe in it to triumph and become great. * After all those blows, the saint's body was not weakened, but, on the contrary, the power of Christ still appeared by him through great signs: from the beginning, it was Christ's light that had illuminated him in the pit. All night, it lit wherever he was in the cell and, during the day, whenever it grew dark.[182] Many people clearly saw this. Against that one[183] who struck him God sent an abominable demon to kill him; men from his household carried him as though he were dead and brought him to the holy Mār Grigor.

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[180] A reference to the Passion of Christ (John 19:33–34).

[181] Cf. 1 Cor 4:9.

[182] Cf. Ex 13:21; 24:17; Matt 17:5; Luke 9:34.

[183] B omits.

ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ
ܠܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ
ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ

However, resembling his Lord, he did not repay him with evil, but with good.[190] He rose and prayed, then traced the sign of the cross between his eyes; instantly, the demon left him, fleeing. He went and told the King and his dignitaries all that had happened, acknowledging his fault, and great fear seized all pagans.

Delegation of bishops and other Christians at the royal court

18 Following these events, bishops and believers gathered and came from the Persians' provinces to the King's court. When they arrived, they complained and presented a request before the King concerning the destruction of churches and monasteries. However, Christ's strength did not come to their aid: this was so that the religion of Christianity[191] would not seem to be maintained thanks to human authority like the empty religions. The bishops, the elders, and many of the believers were made prisoners because of the true faith. When he, Mār Grigor, saw all these afflictions that arose against the Church of Christ, his mind did not weaken in the slightest. On the contrary, the religion grew further still in his eyes. And to all those who were imprisoned with him he was offering consolation from the words of the Holy Scriptures, telling them that they should not fear temporal death,[192] because Christ our Lord would give them eternal life and crowns in that kingdom where the angels reside and because his royal diadem and dominion would never be destroyed.

[190] Cf. Rom 12:17.
[191] B: "the religion of the Christians."
[192] Cf. Matt 10:28; Luke 12:4.

ܐܒܕ ܠܗ ܀ ܐܒܕ ܕܥܒܕ ܡܢ ܕ ܀ ܒܝܬ ܟܪܝܬ ܕ ܐܦ[193] ܐܡ ܀
ܡܢ ܐܬܪ ܀ ܡܫܬܐ ܒܗ ܟܠܝ ܟܡܐ ܠ ܢܥܒ ܠܥ ܡܢ
ܟܬܒ ܠ ܐ[194]ܡܢܝܬܐ ܟܠ ܒܗ ܠܐ ܡܐ ܐܦ ܐܢ
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Resumption of hostilities with the Romans. Mihrān's betrayal

19 Five months later, the King left with his troops to wage war against the Romans. He departed from Maḥozē and took the desert road * to Pērōz-Šābuhr, the town of the Ṭayyāyē.[197] He pitched his tent in a village known as Dana. Then he left that place and went a few parasangs[198] away and set up his camp. While he was there, Mihrān arrived from the land of the Huns. He had been left to keep guard there. When the magi heard and then gathered together, they said to him:

– "What has come over your brother Grigor for him to become infatuated with this religion of the Christians? All these blows and torture are considered as nothing by him. On the contrary, day by day, he becomes greater and is more glorified by everyone. Many magi are converting and becoming Christians when they see the power that accompanies him.[199] If we let him live, our entire religion will be lost!"

They deliberated and declared that they should request from the King that he allow them to execute him.

His own brother was persuaded and became for them an associate and an accomplice in shedding innocent blood.[200] In the sixth week of the great Fast,[201] he presented himself before the King and submitted this request to him: that he deliver Grigor to the magi so they could execute him. However, on that day, the King was unwilling, and [Mihrān] left his presence greatly dejected.

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[197] Pērōz-Šābuhr ("victorious [is] Šābuhr," later al-Anbar), on the eastern bank of the Euphrates in the Sasanian province of Asūrestān.

[198] A parasang was equivalent to about 5.6 km.

[199] Cf. Mark 16:20.

[200] Betrayal by a relative is a classic theme in martyrological narratives.

[201] That is, the final week of Lent preceding Holy Week.

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Death sentence; farewell and final threats from the magi

20 Then, on another day, all the dignitaries presented themselves before the King, and the magi rose up against Mihrān, accusing him and saying:

– "If Grigor isn't put to death, our entire religion will be destroyed by him and everyone[204] will become Christian!"

So the King, wanting to fulfill the magi's will, ordered that he be taken from the prison to the King's court and said:

– "May no one know why he is sent for, lest the Christians stage an uprising against the magi."

Then, after that one who had been sent to tell him left, the saint knew, by the grace of the Holy Spirit that dwelled within him, that the time of his decapitation by the sword, in a death of martyrdom on behalf of Christ, was drawing near and that he would offer the shedding of his blood as a sacrifice to God, who is Lord of all.[205] He immediately rose and prayed, and he thanked God and said:

– "I give thanks to you, O Christ, for having strengthened me during all these torments. But now, come to my aid as you have helped me before, * so that I may cross through this frightening sea of death the crossing of which is difficult for the nature of human beings. Do not turn from me, do not abandon me, and let me not become lax – otherwise, the pagans will say that the Christians do not have a true god."

Then his soul and his body were strengthened and he began to exult and dance like someone who is on their way to the bridal chamber.[206]

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[204] B: "and all the magi."

[205] Cf. Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 5:7.

[206] The "bridal chamber" (cf. also §§ 24, 28) is the place where Christ the Bridegroom consummates his relationship with the Christian. On this topic, see R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom. A Study in*

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21 At this time, Mār Šalmaï, bishop of Ledān,[214] was incarcerated with him in the prison and with him many priests and believers. Mihr-Narseh, bishop of Zabē,[215] was imprisoned at the King's court and with him there were many priests and deacons[216] who had come together from the various regions and had presently found themselves in Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē. When they learned that the King had ordered that [Grigor] be brought to him, they gathered unto him from everywhere. Some of them said he would certainly be released and given back his former office, whereas others said that he would not. As for Mār Grigor, * he told them:

– "The time when I will depart this life by death with a sword is near;[217] I rejoice and exult. I will persevere firmly and valiantly and I know that my death will have many benefits for me and all the believers and be a shame and a disgrace for all the pagans. Do not be sad, as though I were leaving you. Rather, my body will remain with you and you will rejoice[218] far more than at present.[219] My soul will join the congregation consisting of the righteous from Adam up until today. In this way, in his ineffable wisdom God has wanted all human beings to take the path of death in this world and to pass on to immortal life in the eternal kingdom."

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[214] Karkā d-Ledān in Bēth Huzāyē, which is the Hūzestān of Middle Persian sources. Šalmaï is mentioned at the Synod of Mār Abbā in 544, which attests that he was eventually released. J.-B. Chabot, *Synodicon orientale* (Paris, 1902), 331, Syr. 78.

[215] Zabē corresponds with a region in southern Babylonia located between Seleucia-Ctesiphon, which was the capital, and Kaškar. B: "Mār Mihr-Narseh."

[216] B: "believers."

[217] Cf. Matt 26:18.

[218] Cf. John 16:6, 20, 22.

[219] Cf. John 13:33–16:20.

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He said to them:

– "All of you, pray for me, that Christ may make me strong in this struggle in which I persevere."

When they heard from the righteous one himself all these words that transcended human nature, they were stupefied and said:

– "What is this power that is attached to this man?[227] And what is this immense joy that he has at the very moment of his death, surpassing the joy of all the assemblies of immortal angels?"

Thereupon, they departed from him, * astonished and distressed but filled with wonder. He embraced and kissed them,[228] and then they left him.

22 Then on the morning of the day that is the Saturday of the sixth [week] of Lent he arose exulting and went through the streets of the town. Many people gathered to see the athlete garbed in victory who advanced toward battle with death. And they saw in their minds, as though it were a mirage, that assemblies of angels were surrounding him on every side – and he went along with them. Because of that, he rejoiced greatly. He was garbed * truly in the armour of the Holy Spirit and the helmet of the power of God was set upon his head; he wore on his feet the readiness of the gospel of peace.[229] He saw Christ sitting at the right hand of God,[230] strengthening him and saying:

– "Do not fear, Grigor, because I am with you!"[231]

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[227] Cf. Luke 6:19; Mark 5:30.

[228] Is this referring to the "holy kiss" of peace, a sign of Christian communal cohesion before partaking of the Eucharist (cf. 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; Rom 16:16; 1 Th 5:26; cf. 1 Pet 5:14)?

[229] Eph 6:13–17.

[230] Cf. Acts 7:56; Matt 26:64; Mark 14:62; Luke 22:69; 1 Pet 3:22.

[231] Cf. Isa 41:10.

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After his departure, the great *mowpeṭa* sent for him and asked him amidst all the dignitaries:

– "How long will you persist in this wicked thinking?"

However, Mār Grigor replied to him:

– "Personally, I wish for all humanity to acquire this true manner of thought so that they do not deny the true God."

The *mowpeṭa* said to him:

– "Just say one word, however little, against Christ and you will immediately be freed from these bonds!"

Mār Grigor then replied to him: *

– "It is not with many words that we bring ourselves close to or far from God by either our confessing God or denying God. As for me, I am a Christian, and I will not deny Christ."

So they sent him off in his bonds.

23 On Monday, all the dignitaries gathered. They sent for Mār Grigor and started to say to him:

– "You are the son of a great family; you are mighty and strong in battle and recognised as one of us. The King is fond of you. Spare this beauty of yours as well as your youth, which will be destroyed before its time: deny Christ and confess our religion! If * you do this, you will be honoured by the King with great honours and you will be the first among us."

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Mār Grigor then replied:

– "There is no glory greater than this: to die a death for God. And as God is greater than human beings, so, too, is his glory, and as God lasts forever, so, too, does his glory last forever and it is inalienable. The King's glory, on the other hand, is temporal: death will put an end to it and destroy it. I am a Christian and it is our Lord Jesus Christ whom I fear, the judge of the living and the dead."[246]

Thereupon all threatened him and gnashed their teeth at him[247] and they ordered that he be put to death within the hour. But God did not allow the saint's death to be ordinary as though by accident, so that his death should not appear to come from human beings alone and not from God. He rendered their whole threat ineffective and preserved him until the Friday of the crucifixion, so that on it at the very hour upon which Christ was raised upon the cross by the murderous Jews, on that same day the good servant of Christ would be executed at the same time by the iniquitous magi and he would exalt the triumph[248] of his death more than that of his life. He would show how a death considered contemptible and bad among human beings is great and glorious for the righteous, how much praise and exaltation he lays upon their heads[249] by way of the holy angels and human beings on the day of their execution, how much more God cherishes the deaths of holy martyrs than the lives of the iniquitous and impious who do not please the will of God.

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[246] 2 Tim 4:1. See the profession of faith made at the synod of 410, elaborated in accordance with the terms of the credo of Nicaea, J.-B. Chabot, *Synodicon orientale*, 22–23.

[247] Cf. Ps 111 (112):10.

[248] We follow the interpretation of P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha, de trois autres patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques, nestoriens* (Paris, 1895), 383 n. 1: *d-* instead of *w-*.

[249] Cf. Heb 2:9.

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He does not envy those who love him that they should be honored by a glory such as his.[256] Rather, he makes it known to all human beings and angels that, as he has glorified them in this world with his own glory, in the same way he will glorify them in the world to come, in that kingdom of heaven. As our Lord himself said: "you may eat and drink at my table,"[257] "I am going in order to prepare a place for you,"[258] and "Where I am, you also shall be with me."[259] Because * of all this, at the time that our Lord Christ was crucified, on Friday upon the sixth hour,[260] at that very time the holy martyr was put to death. Christ openly made known his secret love for him before all creatures.

Execution

24 Following these events, the King left the site of his camp and went to pitch his tent opposite a village called Naharit. Nearby, there is a great royal citadel. And while he was there, the Friday of the crucifixion arrived. In the fifth hour the order was given to put the holy Mār Grigor to death. Immediately, swiftly, those who had been ordered to accomplish this task set off. They found him as he sat in his tent and greeted him. They hastened him along, saying:

– "Rise! The King is calling for you. He has taken pity on you and ordered that you be freed from your bonds."

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[256] John 17:20–22; Rom 8:30.

[257] Luke 22:30.

[258] John 14:2–3.

[259] John 14:3.

[260] The parallel with the life of Jesus continues; e.g., Christ on the cross upon the sixth hour, Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44; John 19:14.

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But the saint understood that they were saying this to him in mockery, and his mouth was filled with laughter.[264] He was laughing at them and said:

– "Truly, are you not lying in what you just said, that the King has requested my release? Yet he is going to release me from a world of affliction for another one filled with eternal joys, and no human being will be able to take them from me![265] But get up! Let us go where you like!"

That very instant he placed his head between his knees and began to pray, saying:

– "Come to my aid, God, and strengthen me. Behold, the time has come for your power to become manifest bountifully in me, a sinner. The moment is upon me and the hour has come for my body to be delivered into the hands of my murderers.[266] Come to my aid, Lord, and strengthen me so I may drink from this cup of death[267] for your holy name: for death is fearsome and cruel for mortal nature."

After he prayed and said this, he got up firmly and valiantly, joyful, exulting and rejoicing like one who was going to a bridal chamber. He was neither trembling nor afraid and he did not slacken out of fear of the King.

[264] Ps 125 (126):2.
[265] Cf. John 16:22.
[266] Cf. Matt 17:22.
[267] Cf. Luke 22:42–43; Matt 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36.

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25 When he arrived at the citadel and went inside, he asked his executioners to give him some time to pray. After he went and prostrated himself, he prayed out loud[269] saying:

– "My soul thirsts for you, * living God; when will I come and see your face? God, my tears have become my only food. Day and night, each day, they say to me: 'Where is your God?'[270] Now, my Lord, openly show your power and your mercy to me: do not let my death be like all other people's, but, as on the day when your Christ was crucified and died to save the world, on this same day, you have strengthened me, a sinner, in your great mercy, so that I may be put to death for your holy name. Now, my Lord, swiftly receive my spirit[271] and free me from these chains. In return for today's torture, make me rejoice in that eternal kingdom of yours."

After he finished his prayer, he quickly rose and approached his executioners, laughing, rejoicing, exulting and dancing, and his face was like the face of an angel.[272] Then, as all who were there saw from his face that he was exulting, beaming, and glorious, and like the light of the sun,[273] and that he was neither afraid nor trembling when faced with the knife, which was sharpened and threatening him – then a great fear seized them. The hands of the executioners lost their strength and all those who were gathered there said:

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[269] Cf. Matt 26:39.

[270] Ps 41 (42):3–4. Cf. 62 (63):1.

[271] This adds to the *Imitatio Christi* motif (Matt 10:17–22); cf. Acts 7:55–60.

[272] Cf. Acts 6:15.

[273] This light evokes the transfiguration of Christ, just before his Passion (Matt 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36), and perhaps also the *xvarnah*, the light of the glory, in Zoroastrianism.

25 ܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܒܥܝ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܒܥܝ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܠܐ

– “Perhaps this man is not a mortal human being but is one of the spiritual forces and appears in the likeness of a human being?”[280]

26 When he saw that the executioner was very frightened and that his hands were losing their strength, he called to him, encouraged him, and said:

– “Take courage and do not be frightened, because you are doing a good deed this day and I will give you a good wage.”

Then he called his servant and told him that they should give him money and great honors. After he finished and accomplished all this, he sat on the ground and again called his servant; he took his sandals from his feet, removed his clothes, gave them to him and gave him this command:

– “Go and convey these to my friends and convey peace to all the workers of Christ.”

Then he joined his hands and extended his neck before the knife while exalting and glorifying * Christ. And the saint was decapitated, at the time of the sixth hour on the day of the Friday of the crucifixion, while our Lord Jesus Christ was strengthening him at that time and he did not feel the pain of the knife,[281] but rather, just as the blessed Abraham who did not suffer at the execution of his son Isaac[282] because God’s love for him was greater than his love for his beloved [son], in the same way, the martyr did not suffer at the time of his death, because the love for Christ in his heart was greater than the corruption of his body, and he yearned to go to Christ his Lord more than to remain in this life.[283]

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[280] Cf. Acts 14:11–12.

[281] L: “the pain of execution.”

[282] Cf. Gen 22:1–19. The motif of the sacrifice of Isaac is often evoked in martyrological texts.

[283] Cf. Phil 1:23.

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And as if upon the couch of sleep the body of the blessed man reposed, and he rested and was not troubled in the least.

And although the saint had been decapitated, he remained alive for nearly two hours. The one who decapitated him recognized this, and he was respectful of his body, which did not move around like those of the others who were executed. It was especially at this that people were astonished. They clearly observed the grace of the Holy Spirit, which was dwelling in him. Approaching him and placing their hands on his heart, they noticed that his body was as warm as before and that his heart was beating slightly. Fear seized all the pagans and they began to cry and wonder at him. They lifted their hands to the sky, saying:

– "This thing that has been committed on this very day is an iniquity!"

Panegyric of the saint

27 Let none be surprised, however, that these events unfolded in this manner, for it is not difficult for the power of Christ to perform such miracles as these for those who love him as a source of praise and exaltation for them, as a source of honor and glory from the mouths of all creatures for his holy name, and as a source of shame and infamy for Satan and all his servants! During the hour following the saint's decapitation, the light of the sun darkened[287] and it remained in darkness from the day of the Friday of the crucifixion until the * Friday following the Confessors,[288] which has been made a memorial for the holy martyr by the entire Church. The sun was proclaiming and preaching to the whole of creation[289] by this darkness:

– "I am a creature, not God, I am the servant, not the master."

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[287] Matt 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44.

[288] The Friday after Easter.

[289] B: "to all the creatures."

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ܟܝܕ ܗܢ ܐܡ ܡܬܐ ܒܗ ܀ ܟܬܒ ܡܢ ܡܝ ܟܐ ܠܐ ܐܒ
܀ ܡܝܟ ܐܡ ܟܐ ܫܐ ܀ ܡܢ ܡܝ ܠܐ ܦܡ ܟܐ ܕܒ
܀ ܡܠܟ ܟܗ ܠܐ ܫܒܚ ܒܗ ܗܠ ܟܐ ܀ ܟܠ ܗܠ
ܒܗ ܠܐ ܒܗ ܐܟ ܟܬ ܗܢ ܟܐ ܗܠ ܒܗ ܟܐ ܗܢ
ܟܝ ܐ[290] ܟ ܒ ܐ ܒ ܒ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܐ ܟ ܟ ܐ ܟ
ܐ ܐ[291] ܐ ܐ ܀ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ
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27 ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܐ

It was as if the sun were being thoroughly punished by God like a rebellious servant for the sake of those who worship it. Through its punishments, it proclaimed to all those who worship it that cruel, bitter torments are reserved, far from Christ, for all those who abandon God, the creator of all creatures, the author of all beings, the provider and the donor of all goods. They persist in resisting the venerable God and prostrate themselves and honor creatures that have the appearance of Satan, their master. They are ignorant and unintelligent because the sight in their eyes has become clouded as is the understanding of their hearts, for just as Satan was expelled and fell from the heights of heaven to the nether regions of the earth, so also all his servants – those who accomplish his will – will be expelled from that great and glorious height of the kingdom of heaven and the residence of the Spirit, [being cast down] to torment and darkness, to a burning and inextinguishable fire, to the nether regions of Gehenna, from which there is again no possible ascent for them.[296] Rather, darkness and gloom alone are the residence of all the evil and the wicked, where there is absolutely neither the light nor the radiance of what is good. Truly, Lord God, it will be thus for all those who stand against your will, who hate and persecute your servants and those who fear and worship you, who are ready and desire to kill them and to shed their blood as though they were lambs or kids.[297]

[296] Cf. Luke 16:26.

[297] This alludes to Passover and thus Easter. Cf. Ex 12:1–7.

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ܕܐܡ ܕܟ ܡܬܝܠܕ ܫܒܐ ܠܡ. ܒܛܠ ܡܢܝ ܠܡ ܟܠ ܫܘ: ܕܐܝܟ ܕܚܫ
ܒܠ ܠܐ ܐܡܠ ܡܫܟܚ ܪܝܫܐ ܕܟܬ ܪܫܝ: ܠ ܡܢܝ ܐܡܠ
ܡܫܟ ܪܐܝ [300]ܕܡܠܟ ܠ ܡܫܚ ܡܢ ܐܡܠ: ܕܫܚ
ܡܫܟ ܕܐܡܐ ܕܫܘܝܟܐ. ܐܝܟ ܐܡܠ ܫܚܫ. ܐܒܝ
ܡܝܫ ܡܢ ܐܡ ܡܝܐ: ܐܫ ܕܡܠ ܠܐ ܡܝ ܒܐ ܡܢ. ܐܒ
.ܡܟܒܐ ܟܠ ܡܫ ܟܠ. ܐܡܝ ܟܡ ܗܢ ܡܝܒ ܐܒ
ܫܒܐ [301]ܐܡ ܫܫ. ܐܡܠ ܟܐ ܐܡܝܫ ܐܡ
ܗܢ ܟܫ: ܟܝ ܡܒܝ ܟܐ ܫܫ ܟܐ ܠ ܐܒ ܟ
ܟܐ ܐܡ ܐܐ. ܫܝ ܡܫܐ ܡ: ܡܫ ܐܡܠ ܡܐ
[302]ܡܒܝ ܟܫ ܟ ܫܐ ܝ: ܟܐ ܡ ܟ
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Wonders around Grigor's body

28 Once the saint was crowned, foot soldiers and cavalry were sent to guard his body so that the Christians could not come and seize it.[303] However, Christ did not allow their plans to succeed, but rather when night fell countless Christians gathered together and carried off the saint's body; it was laid in Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē. The remaining parts of his body were seized by the mass of believers and they went to other places and faraway lands.[304] They were deposited and honored in gold and silver reliquaries. Succor flows to people from them constantly every day and shall forever.

On Saturday morning, tens of thousands of believers that no one could count gathered together in that place where the holy martyr Mār Grigor was crowned to offer up praises and panegyrics to the divine nature, the power of which they saw manifest in a mortal human being, for his power was in [Christ's] power and he scorned destructive death on account of faith in Christ. While standing by and observing the magi and pagans heard the praises and panegyrics they were offering up to God and they saw that from that citadel where the saint's body was placed, instead of the fetid smell of human corpses, an endless scent of incense[305] was emanating from it, and its odor dispersed throughout the King's camp. And instead of being a deserted, dreaded place for passersby, it was filled with tens of thousands of people, like a royal bridal chamber.

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[303] Cf. Matt 27:64.

[304] On the diffusion of his cult in Armenia, see N.G. Garsoïan, *L'Église arménienne et le Grand Schisme d'Orient* (CSCO 574, Subsidia 100; Louvain, 1999), 228: a church is dedicated to "Grigor the Ražik" (i.e., from Bēth Raziqāyē) at Dvin.

[305] A recurring theme in hagiographies, the fine fragrance and the lack of decomposition attest to the martyr's resemblance to Christ: he has become Christ's "pleasing aroma" (2 Cor 2:15–16). On this subject, see A. Paravicini Bagliani (ed.), *Parfums et odeurs au Moyen âge. Science, usage, symboles* (Micrologus Library 67; Florence, 2015).

28 ܟܕ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܪ ܕܡܪ ܓܪܝܓܘܪ ܦܝܪܐܢ-ܓܘܫܢܣܦ ܕܒܫܡ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܒܫܡ ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܡܝܢ ܘܐܡܝܢ ܀ ܒܫܢܬ ܫܢܬ ܒܫܢܬ ܫܢܬ ܒܫܢܬ ܫܢܬ

And from that time – and it will be so for eternity – people have been taking the dust from that place where the saint was crowned in garments of purple and silk as succor for themselves.[313] When the pagans and the magi saw this, they were ashamed and covered their faces. They were utterly unable to open their mouths to speak.

Commemoration

29 These are all the wonders that Christ performed alongside the holy martyr Mār Grigor; Christ showed him so much love in this fight,[314] and through him, God wanted to bring creation back to its creator and waken human beings from the weight of sin under which they lied. That place where the blessed martyr Mār Grigor was crowned * has become forever a place for worshiping Christ. Various forms of succor flow to human beings from it; wherever some part of the holy body[315] has been deposited, God's power has been manifestly apparent through the instances of healing succor that flow from it to all the ill and afflicted.

[313] This detail refers to *ḥnana*, which was made from the dust of relics taken from the tombs of the martyrs. It was used in Syriac Churches for prophylactic purposes and to cure the sick. See discussion in C. Jullien, and F. Jullien, "Du *ḥnana*. Ou la bénédiction contestée," in F. Briquel Chatonnet *et alii* (eds.), *Sur les pas des araméens chrétiens. Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux* (Cahier des Études syriaques 1; Paris, 2010), 333–48.

[314] P. Bedjan suggests possibly vocalizing *dr'* as *dārā*, meaning "generation", P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha*, p. 393 n. 1.

[315] B: "some part of the saint's body."

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[317]ܐܡܒܪܟ ܪܝܪܚܠ ܗܢ ܪܝܫܐ ܪܒܚܝ ܪܒܫܕ ܪܐ
ܐܡ ܠ ܕܢ ܘܚܕ ܠܠ ܘܘܡ ܥܡ ܕܢ ܪܒܪܝ ܪܒ
ܘܘܡ ܥܒܕ ܠ ܐܠ ܠܚ ܐܡܪ ܐܡܒܪܟ ܥܒܕ ܡܚ
ܪܒܪܝ ܐܡܒܪܟ ܐܡܒܪܟ

29 ܗܢ ܪܒܪ ܪܡ ܚ ܪܒܟ ܢܚ ܪܚܝܪ ܡܠ ܡܠ
ܪܗ ܪܡ ܪܒ ܪܒܟ ܚ ܚ ܐ ܐ ܐ ܪܡ ܐ
ܢܚ ܪܒ ܚ ܪ ܪ ܐ ܪ ܪ ܐ ܪ ܪ ܐ ܪ
ܗ ܚ ܘ ܒ ܪ ܐ ܪ ܪ ܐ ܪ ܪ ܐ ܪ ܪ ܐ ܪ
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As for those of us who are gathered for this spiritual feast for the commemoration[320] of the holy martyr, let us imitate and wonder at his manner of life, so that on the day when Christ appears with an army of his angels and raises all the dead,[321] giving to the good the kingdom and to the wicked Gehenna,[322] we may be judged worthy of seeing Mār Grigor, the illustrious martyr, with Christ tying upon him the crown of the Spirit that will be continuously unwithering forever. Amen!

End of the story of Mār Grigor, the illustrious martyr.

[320] The term *dukrāna* literally means "memory" or "remembrance" but comes to be used technically for the commemoration of saints. The Church of the East, which recognized numerous other saints, traditionally commemorated the martyrdom of Grigor each year.
[321] Cf. Matt 16:27; 1 Cor 15:21–27.
[322] Cf. Matt 25:31–46; John 5:28–29.

ܫܘܪ ܫܡܗ ̈[323]ܡܝܟܐܝܠ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܟܪܝܬ ܥܡ ܟܠ ܕܐܬ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܠܝ ܒܗ ܐܠܐ ܒܫܡ ̈ܝܫܘܥ ̈ ̈ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪ ̈ܗ ̈ ̈ܕܐܠܗܐ ̈ ̈ܚܝܐ ̈ ̈ܕܐܒܐ ̈ ̈ܕܫܡ ̈ܝܐ ̈ ̈ܘܕܪ ̈ܘܚܐ ̈ ̈ܩܕ ̈ܝܫܐ

MARTYRDOM OF MĀR YAZD-PANĀH

Now, the Martyrdom[1] of Mār Yazd-panāh, the illustrious martyr.

Persecution. Portrait of Yazd-panāh

1 It happened that after Mār Grigor the martyr was crowned,[2] the believers saw his constancy through all his suffering for the fear of God,[3] for he scorned his own wealth, glory, and all that belonged to him and delivered his own body to death by the sword for the true faith. They saw with their own eyes what they had heard only through report.[4] Above all, they were strengthened in the fear of God and faith in Christ was exalted in their eyes. They prepared themselves for suffering and death by the sword for the true faith. Instead of that terror and prior fear in which they had previously lay they received much assurance and courage before the King and his dignitaries and before all the pagans. They thus proclaimed and said:

– "We are Christians and we will not deny Christ, Lord of all."

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[1] Ms. B: "History." The Syriac *sahdutā* means "martyrdom" and also "testimony." The translation depends on the context: because the story relates an execution, "martydom" is preferable here, whereas ʿAwira (*infra* § 12) is only a confessor and so "testimony" is used in reference to him.

[2] Grigor Pīrān-Gušnasp, *spāhbed*, a general-in-chief of the empire during the reign of Khusrō I, converted from Zoroastrianism to Christianity, was martyred in 542.

[3] On "fear of God," see A. Becker, "Martyrdom, Religious Difference, and 'Fear' as a Category of Piety in the Sasanian Empire. The Case of the Martyrdom of Gregory and the Martyrdom of Yazdpaneh," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2/2 (Fall, 2009), 300–36. Depending on the context the Syriac term "fear" (*deḥltā*) is often translated here as "religion."

[4] Cf. 1 Cor 2:9; Isa 64:3; Jer 3:16.

[Fol. 67v] ܗܘ ܕܫܡܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܝܙܕ ܦܢܝ[5] ܕܒܗܪܡܐ ܒܪܟ[6] ܕܫܡܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܝܙܕ ܦܢܝ ܕܒܗܪܡܐ[7]:

1 ܐܬܪܟܬܐ ܕܐܡܐ ܕܫܡܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܝܗ ܠܠܒܗܘܢ ܝܗ ܠܐ ܫܠܡܐ ܒܝܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܝܫܢ ܕܫܠܡ ܫܠܝܛܘܬܐ ܕܥܠܡ ܒܥܠ ܕܒܗܪܡܐ ܫܒܚ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܥܠ ܕܒܗܪܡܐ ܒܝܫ ܠܒܫܪܐ ܘܠ ܫܡ ܒܢܝ ܒܢ ܠܗ ܘܒܝܕܗ ܠܗ ܒܢ ܠܐ ܐܡ ܐܬܩܛܠܬ ܐܡܐ ܕܫܡܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܝܙܕ ܦܢܝ ܕܒܗܪܡܐ ܠܐ ܫܡܥ ܒܫܠܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ[9] ܕܫܒܚܬ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܥܠ ܕܒܗܪܡܐ ܐܬܩܛܠ ܒܝܫ ܐܡܐ ܕܫܡܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܝܙܕ ܦܢܝ ܕܒܗܪܡܐ ܐܬܩܛܠ ܐܡ ܚܫܒ ܕܫܡܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܝܙܕ ܦܢܝ ܕܒܗܪܡܐ ܠܐ ܫܡܥ

And so the magi were putting them to the test: Would the Christians become lax by seeing Grigor's death * or not? This alone was not enough for them, but rather they sent for a man zealous for God and ablaze with the Holy Spirit, who was imprisoned in the land of the Huzites[11] due to faith in Christ. His name was Yazd-panāh, which translates to "God is his refuge,"[12] and he was from a village near Karkā d-Ledān called Susa,[13] where many magi dwelled; they were renowned for that erroneous doctrine.

This Yazd-panāh was one of those famous and well-known people among them. He had been instructed in this doctrine more than all of them, as Moses was in the wisdom of the Egyptians,[14] and he was a potentate and judge in that region. However, Christ, who saw his goodwill, did not allow him to be the servant of Satan nor repeatedly to fulfil his will in that error of the followers of the impious Zoroaster.

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[11] The land of the Huzites, i.e., the Susiana of the Greek sources, Bēth Huzāyē in Syriac, Hūzistān in Middle Persian.

[12] The Middle Persian name Yazd-panāh is formed by *yazd*, "god," and *panāh*, "protection" or "refuge." The hagiographer understands the final *-h-* of the name as if it were the Syriac possessive suffix. The name is equivalent to the Greek θεο-φύλακτος (Ph. Gignoux, C. Jullien, and F. Jullien, *Noms propres syriaques d'origine iranienne* [*Iranisches Personennamenbuch* Band VII. *Iranische Namen in Semitischen Nebenüberlieferungen.* Fasz. V; Vienna, 2009], 145, n° 455).

[13] When the *Martyrdom of Yazd-panāh* was written, it seems that Susa had not yet recovered from the military tragedy inflicted on it in the fourth century. See R. Gyselen, and H. Gasche, "Suse et Ivān-e-Kerkha, capitale provinciale d'Ērān-xwarrah-Šāpūr. Note de géographie historique sassanide," *Studia Iranica* 23/1 (1994), 19–35; R. Boucharlat, "Suse à l'époque sasanide: une capitale prestigieuse devenue ville de province," *Mesopotamia* 22 (1987), 357–66; C. Jullien and F. Jullien, "Le christianisme à Suse et en Susiane," *Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément* 74 (Paris, 2003), 596–652.

[14] Acts 7:22.

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Rather, he selected him from them as a pearl from common stones and he secretly sent him strength and filled him with the grace of the Holy Spirit. His soul was awoken as from a deep sleep in such a way that he could actually hear the teachings of the religion of God. He began by entering the city,[18] approaching the sons of the Covenant[19] and inquiring about Christianity. After he had heard from them about Christ and the kingdom of heaven, the true faith was further kindled in him and the religion of God grew even more great in his eyes.

Conversion. Polemic with the magi

2 A little later, after he grasped that that religion, which he had previously embraced, is an error and that this one of the Christians is true, he immediately received the baptism of Christ: he was made a disciple and became a Christian. He despised the whole religion of his ancestors, hated and abandoned all his goods pertaining to this world, his wealth and his possessions – everything he had.[20] He delivered himself to death, to imprisonments, to torments for the sake of Christ.[21] He began to argue with the magi and refuted the arguments of their doctrine. Those who were considered among them to be wise and notable could not * resist him.[22]

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[18] I.e., Karkā d-Ledān.

[19] On the *bᵉnay qᵉyāmā*, see M.-J. Pierre, "Les 'Membres de l'Ordre,' d'Aphraate au *Liber Graduum*," in F. Jullien (ed.), *Le monachisme syriaque* (Études syriaques 7; Paris, 2010), 11–35; R. Macina, "Les *bnay* et *bnat qyama* de l'Église syriaque: une piste philologique sérieuse," *Le monachisme syriaque du VIIᵉ siècle à nos jours* 1 (Patrimoine syriaque. Actes du colloque 6; Antelias, Lebanon, 1999), 15–49.

[20] Cf. Luke 6:19–20; see also Matt 13:44–46.

[21] Cf. 2 Cor 11:23; 2 Cor 12:10.

[22] Perhaps parallel with Stephen in Acts 6:10.

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After they attempted to persuade him in many ways but could not turn him from the true faith, they went and spoke about him to the chief *mowpeṭa*,[24] who had jurisdiction[25] in that region. As soon as the *mowpeṭa* heard this, he sent for him and called [Yazd-panāh] before him. And he gently attempted to persuade him and asked:

– "What is the matter, o my brother? Could it be that the Christians really have seduced you? Take care not to err, because there is no religion more true than ours. The King loves it too, and the god Ohrmazd[26] has given all the goods of this world to the magi. If you let yourself be convinced by me now and listen to what I tell you, you will become *mowpeṭa* after me in this region."[27]

3 The chosen one of God Mār Yazd-panāh replied and said to him:

– "Even if this one of yours were the true religion, I would recognize that one who made the heavens and the earth; I would not abandon the creator and worship and honor creatures. God has placed them in the service of human beings, for they exist today but will cease to exist tomorrow. I myself, however, am a Christian and I fear the God of heaven and earth, the one who made the world and all therein.[28]

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[24] Head of the magi.

[25] Lit. "who was in that region." Here and at the end of the section, this clearly refers to his specific jurisdiction. The author of the *History of Mār Abbā* mentions a *mowpeṭa* of Ādurbādagān (§ 26) and another of Asūrestān (Bēth Aramāyē, § 16). These regional *mowpeṭas* were subjected to the chief *mowpeṭa* (cf. Ph. Gignoux, "Titres et fonctions sasanides d'après les sources syriaques hagiographiques," *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 28/1–4 [1983], 197–99).

[26] The supreme deity of Zoroastrianism.

[27] I.e., Bēth Huzāyē.

[28] See n. 63 in the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor*.

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[29]ܡܝܬ ܐܢ ܘܐ ܟܠܡܐ ܕܥܒܕ ܒܟܠ ܝܘܡ. ܡܚܠܦ ܘܐ ܒܝܫ
ܠܗ ܒܕܐ ܒܗ ܐܦ ܐܝܟ. ܒܬܪ ܒܝܫ ܒܝܫܘܬ ܗ ܒܕܐ ܫܟܚ. ܡܬܚ
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He is the judge of the living and the dead.[33] To Him is owed the worship of all creatures. And I, now and forever, will no longer worship or honour the sun, the moon, the stars, fire, or water – these things that were created for our use. I shall further consider no one my God aside from God the creator. I therefore shall confess Christ and I shall serve Him continuously. Neither iron combs[34] nor blows can separate me from His love.[35] Here is my body, delivered into your hands.[36] For I have heard our Lord say: 'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul'."[37]

Imprisonment, threats, and discussion

4 When the *mowpeṭa* heard this, his ire * was greatly provoked. He ordered that he be thrown into hard chains. However, Mār Yazd-panāh was particularly strengthened by the Holy Spirit, which was dwelling in him.[38] He cried out and said:

– "I am a Christian and I serve our Lord Jesus Christ;[39] I no longer worship your empty error of demons."[40]

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[33] This affirmation is that of a creed: the new Christian professes God's supremacy over all of the created world, including the living and the dead.

[34] This refers to a torture instrument used by the Sasanian Persians to lacerate the bodies of several martyrs including Dadū (*AMS* IV.218–19), Isaac of Karkā d-Bēth Slokh (*AMS* II.523, 519) and Kirdag (J.-B. Abbeloos, "Acta Mar Kardaghi," *Analecta Bollandiana* 9 [1890], 79, § 52; J. Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh. Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq* (The Transformation of the Classical Heritage 40; Berkeley, 2006), 58, § 52.

[35] Cf. Rom 8:35, 39.

[36] Cf. Matt 26:45; Mark 9:31; Luke 24:7.

[37] Matt 10:28.

[38] Cf. Col 1:11; Rom 8:11; 2 Tim 1:14.

[39] Cf. Phil 1:1; Rom 1:1.

[40] See n. 23 in the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor*.

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ܫܢܐ [Fol. 69r] ܒܫܡܒܚ ׃ܡܠܟ ܒܝ ܟܐܫܝܟ ܫܐܠ ܒܝ ܪ 4
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[41] B ׃ܒܫܒ

It happened that, feeling ashamed and confused and not knowing what to do with him, they left him in his chains. He stayed in prison for five years while he rejoiced and exulted in his chains more than in all the good things of this world. He wept and prayed, saying:

– "Christ, if you forgive me for the sin I committed in practising the religion of my ancestors, make me worthy of dying on behalf of your name."

It happened that five years later, after Mār Grigor, the valiant martyr, was executed, a decree was promulgated to summon the saint Mār Yazd-panāh from the province of Bēth Huzāyē to Bēth Aramāyē.[42] They said:

– "When he learns of the execution of Mār Grigor, perhaps he will become lax, take fright, and abandon Christianity."

Such was the opinion of his adversaries, but their plan was unsuccessful. Rather, after he went to and arrived at Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē[43] and learned about the saint's death on behalf of the true faith from the believers, from that moment he received strength and a fortitude that transcended the nature of rational beings and was filled with joy and exultation. He gazed at death as a good better than all the goods of this world.[44] He desired and sought to be quickly deemed also worthy of death by the sword, like the blessed[45] Mār Grigor. Those who were with him said to him, as they tried to frighten him:

[42] I.e., from Susiana to central Babylonia.
[43] I.e., Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital of the Sasanian Empire.
[44] Cf. Phil 1:21, 23.
[45] A adds "martyr."

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ܟܬܒ ܟܠ ܀ ܐܡ ܟܬܒ ܡܐܡܪ ܠܡ ܐܡ ܐܡ[47] ܘܡܕܡ[46] ܐܢ
ܡ ܟܫܟ ܠ ܒܢ ܥܒܕ ܐܡ ܥܒ ܀ ܐܝܟ ܕ ܟܝܟ ܟܬܒ
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– "See how Grigor was killed, he of noble birth.[52] The magi did not spare him, not in the slightest, because he would not abandon the religion of the Christians. Now, also spare yourself and do not act this way. Rather, as soon as you arrive at the court, confess only the religion of your ancestors and see what nobleness and honour you will deserve from the King."

However, Mār * Yazd-panāh cried out loudly:

– "Our Lord Jesus,[53] judge me worthy of this kingdom and this bridal chamber,[54] that I may be worthy of Mār Grigor the martyr. Help me and strengthen me! And give me too, sinner as I am, the great boon that belongs to Christians of dying by the sword for your name."

Roman-Persian war. New debates

5 After they transferred him in his chains to the city of Pērōz-Šābuhr,[55] before he arrived the King went out with his armies to engage the Romans in battle.[56]

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[52] Grigor belonged to one of the most renowned families of dignitaries in the Empire, the Mihrāns. Cf. *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor*, §§ 3, 13, 19, 20.

[53] A adds "Christ."

[54] For the common Syriac wedding motif reflected in this passage, see R. Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom. A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge, 2006[2]), 255–57. See *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor*, § 20 n. 208, § 24 and § 28.

[55] On the left bank of the Euphrates. See n. 192 in the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor*.

[56] This refers to the renewal of hostilities between the Persians and the Romans following the peace treaty concluded between Justinian and Khusrō in 532. T. Daryaee, *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire* (London, 2009), 30. The Persians broke the peace treaty in 540. See Procopius, *Persian Wars*, Book II, 5, 1–9, 18, ed. A. A. Dewing, *Procopius* V. *History of the Wars. Book VII (continued) and VIII* (London, 1962), 294–343.

ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܒܪܝ ܠܡܗܘ ܐܬܝ ܗܘ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܘܠܐ ܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܐܠܐ ܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܐܠܗܐ ܘܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܝ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܪܥܐ ܘܟܠ ܫܘܠܛܢ ܕܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܐܪܥܐ ܐܬܝܗܒ ܠܝ ܘܐܢܐ ܫܕܪܬ ܠܟ ܠܡܐܟܠ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܝ ܘܠܐ ܠܡܐܟܠ ܒܝܬ ܐܒܝ

The *mowbedān mowbed*,[59] who was head of the magi, a chief *mowpeṭa*, and the *mowpeṭa* of Bēth Aramāyē arrived at the city of Pērōz-Šābuhr.[60] When they heard that Mār Yazd-panāh had been transferred there, they all gathered together. They sent for him and called him to their assembly and told him:

– "The King orders this with regard to you: if you abandon the religion of the Christians, he will make you the chief *mowpeṭa* over the whole land. Otherwise, he will have you killed as Grigor was killed."

He then valiantly gave them this reply, saying:

– "Do you not know that those who die for God shall live while the living who do not confess God are dead?[61] As for you, show me which is your religion and whom you worship, so that I may know you will kill me justly. If you worship creatures and not God, Lord of all, know that you are condemned;[62] as for myself, I shall worship nothing created. If you kill me, like Mār Grigor, because of the religion of God, I shall rejoice and exult."[63]

He began to debate with them and was demonstrating that their religion is a lie and not truth and that it persisted only due to authority. They found no reply to give him. They then gnashed their teeth at him,[64] saying:

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[59] A supreme Zoroastrian priestly position.

[60] Gignoux has shown that there are three different mowbeds referred to in this passage. See Ph. Gignoux, "Titres et fonctions religieuses sasanides", 191–203.

[61] Cf. John 11:25–26.

[62] Cf. John 3:18.

[63] Cf. Matt 5:12.

[64] Cf. Acts 7:54.

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– "Tomorrow, at this time, we will feed your body to the wild animals."[69]

6 When one of the magi who were gathered there saw that it was the truth that Yazd-panāh spoke he was filled with a zeal for God and set ablaze with His Spirit.[70] He rose among them and said:

– "It is the truth that Yazd-panāh speaks! Come, let all of us sit and debate about the religion of the Christians * and our own and see which of them is true.[71] After the truth is known, if this man is not convinced, it is just that you kill him, but if the faith of the Christians is true, let him go."

The *mowpeṭa* then said to him:

– "Perhaps you would also like to become a Christian?"

However, he replied, saying:

[69] Cf. 1 Sam 17:44. This refers to the Zoroastrian tradition that prohibited burying bodies so as not to pollute the earth. Rather, the corpse was torn apart by wild animals. See H.R. Francisco, "Corpse Exposure in the Acts of the Persian Martyrs and its Literary Models," *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 19/1 (2016), 193–235.

[70] Cf. 2 Cor 11:2; 1 Kgs 19:10, 14.

[71] Debates between Christians and Zoroastrians are especially attested in Syriac and Arabic Christian sources, often in a court context. F. Ruani (ed.), *Les controverses en milieu syriaque* (Études syriaques 13; Paris, 2016), 217–225.

6 [72]ܡܬܪܬܝ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܠ ܝܘܡ ܡܨܥܬܐ ܥܠܝܡ ܪܒܐܟ ܠܟ ܕܐ ܐ
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ܡܫܬ ܪܒܐ ܪܫܐ ܀ ܠܐ ܐܡܪܐ [Fol. 70r] [74]ܫܠܡܝܬܐ ܐܡܪܐ
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ܫܠܐ ܀ ܐܠܡܐ ܕܡ ܠ ܒܫ [76]ܡܐ ܀ ,ܡܥܒܕ ܀ ܡ ܪܝܫ
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ܥܠܡ ܀

[72] B ܡܫܪܬ
[73] B om. ܕܡ
[74] L ܫܠܡܝܬ : B ܫܠܡܝܬ
[75] L ܥܝܕ followed by ܪ : B ܥܝܕ
[76] B ,ܡܥܒܕ

– "All that is manifest is truth and what is hidden is a lie.[77] If the religion of the magi is the truth and they serve the true god, why, then, do you hide your religion?[78] And if it is not true, why do you iniquitously and wickedly persecute the Christians and force them to worship creatures rather than God?"

Then, among them at that time, no one spoke ill to him, because they feared that their religion would be dishonoured and that the magi would turn away from it. Following this, confusion and clamor arose among them.

Exhortation to the faithful. Pressure from the magi

7 When they were bringing the holy Mār Yazd-panāh to prison, the believers wanted to snatch him away from them by force. However, when he saw them, Mār Yazd-panāh spoke to them and, amidst them, began to ask, saying:

– "I am most joyful and I have a superior good, one greater than all the goods of this world. The final seal of our true faith[79] is to die on behalf of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and for us to endure every torment for His name.[80] If we flee death, what distinguishes us from the pagans[81] who, when they suffer affliction for a mere hour, deny their gods due to some brief questioning, because they know they are nothing and that they have no reward?[82]

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[77] This gnomic statement can be read as if it had a typical Syriac meter (3 + 4 : 4 + 3), while there is a play on words between "manifest" (*da-glē*) and "lie" (*daggālutā*). Cf. John 19:19–21; Luke 12:2–3.

[78] Is this referring to private rites practiced in a domestic space? On private and public aspects of Zoroastrian worship, see M. Boyce, *A Persian Stronghold of Zoroastrianism* (Oxford, 1977), 36–37.

[79] In the sense of Rom 14:8.

[80] Cf. 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 11:26.

[81] Cf. Matt 5:47.

[82] Cf. 2 Tim 4:6–8; Matt 5:12a.

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ܡܥܒܕ ܀ ܡܪ ܝܘܡ ܀ ܠܡ ܝܒ ܟܐ ܀ ܕܐܡܪ ܠ ܟ ܡ[83]ܒܪܟ
ܕܐܡܪ ܀

ܡܟܬܒ ܐܟ ܀ ܡܝܬܐ ܒܪ ܡܒܪܟ ܝܒ ܡܥܠ ܡ ܠܟ ܒܪ 7
ܪ[86]ܡܒܪܟ ܝܒ ܕ ܘܐ ܀ ܕܐܡܪ ܟ ܀[85]ܒܪܝܠܐ[84],ܡܒܪܟ
ܝܒܪ ܀[88]ܕܐܡܪ ܡܒܪܟ ܡܟܒ ܝܒ ܀[87]ܕܐ ܝܒ ܕܐ ܡ ܡ
ܡܟܠ ܡܠ ܟ ܡܝ ܡܪܟ ܡܪܟܐ ܀ ܡܪ ܝ ܠ[89]ܡܪܟ
ܐܠ ܒܪܟ ܀ ܡܪܝܝ[90]ܒܪܟܡ ,ܡ ܡܒܪ ܀ ܡ ܡܠ
ܡ ܀ ܡܒ ܠܐ ܡܝܛ ܀ ܒ ܝܒ ܀ ܡ ܡ ܡ ܡ ܝ ܡܒ
ܡܟ ܀ ܡܩ ܟ ܡ ܡ ܡ[91]ܡܟ ܡܪ ܡ ܡ ܡ ܝ ܕ
܀ ܕܐܡܪ ܡ[92]ܒܪܟ ܡ ܡ ܀ ܕ ܡ ܠ ܡ ܀ ܕ ܐ ܡ ܀

[83] B add. ܕܐܡ
[84] L ,ܡܒܪܟ
[85] L ܒܪ ܡܝ
[86] B ܡܒܪ
[87] B ܕܐܡܪ
[88] B ܕܐ
[89] B add. ,ܡ
[90] L ܒܪܟ
[91] L add. in margin
[92] B ܒܪ

For us, it is not the same. Rather every good that belongs to us is in the other world where our Lord Christ is.[93] Do not be sad that I am going to Him.[94] I have hope that He will give me a reward for my afflictions in His kingdom, as the Apostle said: 'For the affliction of this time, although short and brief, prepares for us great glory without end forever and ever.'[95] For we do not rejoice over what is visible, * but rather what is invisible.[96] Behold, I have already received a guarantee about these matters here in this world,[97] for people fear death, and mighty men, kings, the just tremble because of it. As for myself, previously I was wrong and I worshipped the sun, the moon, the stars, and all creatures instead of their creator, and I was also afraid of the mere small rod they struck against me: in His abundant mercy, Christ took pity on me[98] and gave me the grace of the Holy Spirit. He displayed before my eyes the good things of the world to come, such as have already become real. And I shall rejoice now in death by the sword more than in all the goods of this world. If these[99] were not guaranteed, I would not hate my body and deliver it to a death such as this. Due to this strength that Christ has given me, such that I shall not fear temporal death,[100] you, my brothers, rejoice and exult in the faith in our Lord! Be firm and not lax, but seek refuge in the faith of the martyrs and in their bones.[101]

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[93] Cf. Matt 6:20; Heb 10:34–36.

[94] Cf. John 14:28.

[95] Peshitta 2 Cor 4:17. Cf. Rom 8:18.

[96] Cf. 2 Cor 4:18.

[97] Cf. 2 Cor 5:5, 6–9.

[98] Cf. 1 Tim 1:13 and Peshitta Ps 51:1.

[99] I.e., the goods of the world to come. Alternatively, this clause could be rendered, "If these (things I have spoken) were not true".

[100] I.e., corporeal death, as opposed to eternal, spiritual death. Cf. Luke 12:4–5.

[101] This is a reference to the cult of relics, which was understood to offer succor to the faithful.

ܡܫܡܫ ܟܠܗ ܚܝܠܐ ܡܠܟ ܗܘ ܕܐܡ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܢܫ ܡܢ
ܡܚܠܦ ܠܗܘ ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܫܡܥ ܒܝܢ ܡܐܡܪܢ ܟܠ ܕܡ ܡܫܡܫ
ܠ ܫܡܥ ܐܝܟܐ[102] ܒܟܠ. ܠܡ ܢܛܠܐ ܚܕ ܠܟܠ ܗܘ ܠܐ ܐܡ
ܟܠܗ ܒܢ ܫܛܠܐ. ܒܟܠ ܫܠܫ ܐܡܪ ܟܠ. ܡܚܟܠܟ ܐܝܟ
ܡܟܠܟ ܟܠܠ ܟܟ ܗܘ ܟܝ ܟܫܟ. ܠܡܠ ܒܛܠ ܟܠ ܐܡ ܗܘ
ܠܡܟ ܗܘ [Fol. 70^{v}][103]. ܡܢܒܟ ܠܡܟ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܠ ܟܠܟ
ܟܟ ܟܝ ܠ ܒܟܠ ܐܡ ܠܡ ܡܫܟ ܡܫܟ. ܡܢܒܟ ܗܘ
ܐܐܡ ܡܟܐ ܟܟ ܫܟ ܐܐܡ ܠܡ: ܟܒܟ. ܟܟܠ ܟܡ
ܒܐܡ ܟܠ ܒܡ ܟ ܡ ܗܘ: ܟܒܢ ܟܠܒ ܟܒܟ ܫܟ
ܫܠ ܡܟ ܟܒܟ ܟܫܟ ܟܟ ܟܟ ܟܟ ܒܐ ܐܐܡ ܟܟ
ܐܐܡ ܡܟܒ ܟܫ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
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Know what succor was flowing from them at the time of their executions, more than when they were alive, and learn from this what the power of Christ is, for his promises are not false. He leaves us in these afflictions for a little while in order to make known our love for Him, for a greater or more abundant reward is prepared by Him in His kingdom. Now, the kingdom of our king is already at hand,[105] He who shall reign for ever and ever.[106] In exchange for afflictions here in this world He will make us rejoice in His eternal kingdom."

When the believers heard this, they became quiet and praised God because of his faith.

8 Then the magi took the saint and brought him to prison. From evening until morning, all night long, the believers stood in vigil and in prayer. As soon as the day had broken, the magi were afraid that they would remove him from prison. They sent word to the believers:

– "No, we do not want to kill him. Rather, as soon as we get to Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē, we will gently persuade him to abandon * Christianity, but if he is not persuaded, we shall release him and we shall not do anything bad to him."[107]

The believers rejoiced when they heard this, but they did not know that [the magi] were acting deceitfully. They dispersed from around the prison, and when [the magi] saw that they had dispersed, they sent for the martyr and led him from there. They left Pērōz-Šābuhr and took the road leading to Maḥozē, and Yazd-panāh was with them. They put him in the middle and surrounded him on all sides, and they spoke with him gently, saying:

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[105] Cf. Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Mark 1:15; Luke 10:9, 11; 21:31.

[106] Cf. 1 Tim 1:17.

[107] Lit. "if not, we shall release him and …," but an alternative reading of this line is: "If we do not release him, we shall not do anything bad to him."

ܒܗܘ ܀ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܟܬܒ ܕܡܫܟ ܟܠܡ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܟܬܒ
ܡܥܒܕܢܐ ܀ ܐܡ ܟ ܟܫܟܬ ܫܠܡ ܟܬ ܟܠܒ ܟܠܡ ܟܠ ܬ ܡܢ ܟ
[108]ܒܟܠ ܬܒܪ ܀ ܫܠܡ ܟܬܠܟ ܠ ܒܟ ܫܠܒ ܟܠܟܒ ܟ
ܡܒܟܠܟ ܟܟܟ [109]ܟܟ ܟܒ ܟܟ ܠ ܒܟ ܀ ܡܒܠ
ܟܠ ܫܟ ܡܒܟܠ ܡ ܟ ܀ ܟ ܡܒܟܠ ܫ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܟ ܟ ܡܒܟܠ ܠ ܟ ܀ ܟ ܟ ܠ ܟ ܟ ܟ
[110]ܟ ܟ ܀ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
ܡܒ

8 ܟ ܟ ܟ ܀ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ ܟ
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– "Spare your life, your beauty, and your youth: abandon this religion of the Christians and become like one of us again; join in this dignity of ours. You will be praised by many, you will become a chief and governor and acquire great wealth, and we will give you as many villages as you want, and the people in them will be servants to you always and to your sons after you."[111]

The martyr of Christ replied and said to them:

– "Far be it from me[112] to deny Jesus Christ, for He is the Lord of heaven and earth, and to abandon God, the creator of everything and judge of the living and the dead! For the whole of creation depends on His will and subsists by His desire. Far be it from me to praise and worship creatures and to be made ashamed by Christ on that day when He appears in the heavens,[113] gives the kingdom of heaven to the good, and brings punishment upon all the pagans.[114] But who can save me from death, which is set in human nature, and from that Gehenna to come?"[115]

Execution

9 Thereupon they became angry with him and said to him:

– "You're really frightening us! Is Christ the judge of the whole world and not Ohrmazd?"

A soldier who had neither mercy nor pity took charge of him, and when they reached the village, the name of which was Tāymā, they had him kneel there to put him to death.

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[111] Cf. Luke 19:11–27.

[112] There is a wordplay on the root *ḥ-w-s*: To the command, "Spare (*ẖws*) your life, your beauty, and your youth," he responds, "Far be it (*ḥs*) from me to deny."

[113] Cf. Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26.

[114] I.e., Zoroastrians.

[115] Cf. Matt 23:33; 10:28.

ܟܠܡܐ ܕܐܡ ܗܘܬܗ ܗܘܐ ܕܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܠܡ ܡܢ

That wicked, impudent, evil soldier was not yet trained in the craft of execution by the sword. He struck him once with the sword, but the martyr's head was not severed. As his blood poured forth, the martyr said to that murderer:

– "Oh, evil workman, you aren't trained in the craft of execution! * Raise your hand up boldly, strike me forcefully, don't fear, and seize victory[118] for yourself!"

After he struck him twice, but his head was not severed, Yazd-panāh then kneeled down and gestured to his murderer to destroy him swiftly. When one of the King's soldiers present there saw that there was in them neither mercy nor pity, he was filled with the zeal for God and he despised the religion of those who were standing there, drew a knife,[119] approached the martyr and promptly beheaded him. He took his rest instantly as though in sleep,[120] and then, like a whirlwind, they left him and went away.

[118] This term could be translated also as "innocence," i.e., Yazd-panāh forgives his executioner, another instance of *imitatio Christi*, cf. Luke 23:34.

[119] This term is used in the Peshitta for the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:6), a Christlike figure. See the *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor* § 26.

[120] For the association between sleep and death, see John 11:11–14; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:53; Matt 9:24.

ܡܠܐ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܠܡܬܐ ܕ ܀ ܐܡܪܐ ܫܘܝܐ ܒܪܝܐ ܫܠܚ ܢ ܒܐ
ܡܢ ܠܒܪܝܢ ܡܠ ܀ ܐܫܬܡܥ ܕ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܐܡܪ ܒܝܕ ܐܫܬܡܥ
ܒܐ ܐܡܪ ܡ ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܀ ܡܢ ܐܡܪ ܒܥܐܝ ܐܬܪ ܐܡܪ
[Fol. 71ᵛ] ܕ ܡܠܐ ܐܒܥܠܡܐ ܀ ܐܡܪ ܡܠ ܐܡ ܡܠܐ
ܡܠ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܫܡܝܐ ܀ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܥܡܪ ܒܐ ܒܫ ܒܝܕ
ܠܒܪܝܢ ܡܠ ܢܝܫ ܒܫܝܐ ܫܡܝ ܐܬܪ ܐܒܥܐ ܠ ܐܡܐ ܠܥܠ
ܒܫܡܠܐ ܡܠܐܠ ܐܡܪ ܒܫܐ ܒܥܐܝ ܠ ܥܒ ܒܫ ܀ ܡܢ
ܐܡ ܐ ܀ ܒܐ ܐܡܪ ܒܪܐ ܐܡܠ ܒܥܐ ܡ ܀ ܒܥܐ
ܠ ܒܐ ܀ ܐܡܠ ܡܠ ܐܡܪ ܠ ܀ ܐܐ ܒܠ ܐܒܐ ܐܒܫ
ܒܒܠ ܒܐ ܐܠ ܠܒܐ ܀ ܒܐ ܐܡ ܒܐ ܐܠ ܐܡܪ ܐܡܠ
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Removal of the body. The punishment of the wicked

10 Then a certain man, a notable in the kingdom, a believer and someone wealthy in the two worlds, a son of Abraham by his faith,[121] a companion of Job in his manner of life,[122] in truth a disciple of Christ, a father to orphans and widows,[123] a provider for the poor,[124] a haven of peace for all who were distressed and afflicted, one who held priests in high esteem and was friend to those who fear Christ, a builder of churches, a founder of monasteries, one ablaze with the Holy Spirit, with the zeal of the fear of God, one like the counsellor Joseph, the burier of the body of our Lord Jesus Christ;[125] whose name was Ābrōdag,[126] from the city of Weh-Ardašīr[127] – this man secretly ordered his servants and made provision that they should snatch up the saint's body.[128] The grace of God helped them to bear it away, and not a single pagan noticed. They carried him to Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē and set the saint's body where the body of the holy martyr Mār Grigor, his companion, fellow and equal in the confession of Christ, had been laid.

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[121] Cf. Rom 4:9; Gal 3:6, 9; Heb 11:8; Gen 15:6.

[122] Cf. Job 1:1, 8.

[123] Cf. Peshitta Ps 68:6.

[124] Cf. Deut 15:7–8.

[125] Luke 23:50; cf. Mark 15:43.

[126] A Middle Persian name, Ph. Gignoux, C. Jullien, and F. Jullien, *Noms propres syriaques d'origine iranienne*, 29, n° 6a-b. The same character appears in the *History of Mār Abbā*, § 15, ed. F. Jullien, *Histoire de Mār Abba, catholicos de l'Orient. Martyres de Mār Grigor, général en chef du roi Khusro I^er^ et de Mār Yazd-panāh, juge et gouverneur* (CSCO 658–659, Scriptores Syri 254–255; Louvain, 2015), Syr. 85–86; trans. 86–87.

[127] This is another name for the new Seleucia, rebuilt by Ardašīr facing Ctesiphon and on the right bank of the Tigris.

[128] Cf. Tob 1:17–19; 2:4, 7–8.

ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܘ ܒܣܦܪܐ ܕܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܟܬ ܫ ܡ ܕܝ ܟܝܢ 10
ܐ ܕܡܪ ܕܝܘܢ ܕܒܪ ܡܝܢ ܕܒܫܡܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܟܠ
ܐ ܕܡܪ ܕܝܘܢ ܕܒܪ ܡܝܢ ܕܒܫܡܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܟܠ
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܟܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܘ ܒܣܦܪܐ ܕܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܟܬ ܫ ܡ ܕܝ ܟܝܢ

For the execution of these martyrs Christ swiftly repaid them a reward for their labours. On the same day that he killed the saint Mār Yazd-panāh, when the *mowpeṭa* passed not far from him, his horse, at God's instigation, was spooked, threw him off and trampled him; he was injured and died * from his injuries. As for the *mowpeṭa* of Bēth Aramāyē, he was relieved of his command that very hour; he left and his name was erased[130] and he never returned to his position of authority.

11 It happened that after Mār Yazd-panāh the martyr was crowned, his persecutors left, the saint's body was gathered up and honoured, and it was transferred to Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē. Then it was heard in the city of Pērōz-Šābuhr that the elect martyr of Christ, Mār Yazd-panāh, had been crowned and many believers came out to carry his holy body.[131] When they reached that place and could not find it, they wept and wept. They were astonished when they saw that his blood had been spilled everywhere. They took some away as *ḥnana*, in which is hidden divine succor.[132] For they wept not only because of his death, but because they had not been deemed worthy of keeping his holy body with them.

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[130] Cf. Ps 40:6; Deut 25:6, 19. A kind of "damnatio memoriae" can be found later in Arabic and Persian literature for Yazdgird I (399–420); K. Mosig-Walburg, "Yazdgerd I., 'der Sünder'," in Ph. Gignoux, C. Jullien, and F. Jullien (eds.), *Trésors d'Orient. Mélanges offerts à Rika Gyselen* (Studia Iranica. Cahier 42, Paris, 2009), 245–268. Some catholicoi were also condemned either by the king or by the synodal assembly: Yazdgird I ordered that nobody should mention the name of Ma'na as catholicos during his life and after, whereas the memory of Joseph was erased from the diptychs by the Church of the East because of a reprehensible attitude.

[131] B: "the saint's body"

[132] On *ḥnana* and the devotional practices linked to its use, see C. Jullien and F. Jullien, "Du ḥnana. Ou la bénédiction contestée," in F. Briquel Chatonnet, *et alii* (eds.), *Sur les pas des araméens chrétiens. Mélanges offerts à Alain Desreumaux* (Cahier des Études syriaques 1; Paris, 2010), 333–48.

ܫܡܥ ܠܗ ܒܝܕ ܒܪܝܠܗ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܒܝ ܡܪܝ[133] ܠܡܫܝܚܐ
ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܥܠ ܐܪܥܐ. ܘܫܠܝܛ ܐܢܐ ܒܫܡܗ
ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ: ܘܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܠܡܐ ܐܬܐ ܐܢ ܡܛܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܡܥ
ܡܢ ܦܘܡܐ ܡܝܟܐܝܠ. ܡܫܚܬܐ ܡܫܪܐ: ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܡܥ
ܠܡܪܝܡ ܫܘܒܚܐ: ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܒܝ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܡܥ [Fol. 72r]
ܒܕܘܗ. ܡܛܠ[134] ܕܟܬܝܒ ܐܝܠܐ: ܘܐ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܠܟ ܡܢ ܡܠܬܐ ܡܫܠܡ
ܠܐ ܒܢ ܠܡܫܠܡ.

11 ܫܡܥ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܒܝ ܡܪܝ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܐܬܐ ܐܢ ܟܐ ܐܡܪ
ܒܢ ܐܝܫܟܠ ܡܫܠܚܢܐ: ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܝܟ ܐܢܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܟܫܬܐ
ܡܝܡܐ ܠܠܐ ܐܬܐ: ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܡܥ ܒܝ ܡܪܝ. ܫܫܝܛ
ܐܢܫ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܫܡܥ ܒܝ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܡܥ
ܒܝ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܡܥ ܒܝ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ
ܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܟ

Because of the abundance of their faith many believers gathered, men and women alike, at that place where the martyr had been put to death. They dug up dirt from the ground just under it and gathered it in pieces of cloth and their garments as succor for their souls and bodies.[137] They made that place one for the worship of Christ for evermore, and from it various forms of healing succor shall flow forth forever in the name of the illustrious martyr Mār Yazd-panāh.

Both these athletes came forth from the camp of the Christians and Christ armed them against error, while the camp of Zoroaster's party were armed against the true faith. The whole empty error was vanquished and put to shame by these two men armed with the Holy Spirit, soldiers of Christ the King,[138] and the statement of the Apostle, which says, "The weakness of God is stronger than human beings," found its fulfillment.[139]

ʿAwira the Confessor

12 It happened that after the enemies of the truth had been vanquished and put to shame, they did not know what to do. They released and sent away all who had been imprisoned for Christianity. However, the persecution did not stop, but rather it continued for a long time. Persecutors were tormenting the believers and all those who were newly converted[140] so as to * reap, under this pretext, the money of sin. Three years later, when they saw that the believers were not slackening in their faith, but rather that the truth was even more exalted in their eyes and that they were pleasing God's will with their suffering and hurting Satan and his angels with their constancy, they wondered greatly and were astonished and perplexed.

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[137] The text seems to be describing the gathering of dirt that has had contact with the martyr's blood, which would serve as *ḥnana*.

[138] Cf. Eph 6:17.

[139] 1 Cor 1:25; cf. 2 Cor 12:9.

[140] If this denominative verb is rendered more literally the text may be translated as "all those who were newly made disciples."

ܠܡܦܫܩ ܡܢ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܝܟ ܡܐ ܕܡܫܬܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܒܗܕ ܐܪܥܐ ܘܒܗܕ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܢܐ ܐܙܠ ܥܡ ܐܠܗܟ ܒܟܠ ܐܬܪ ܕܐܙܠ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܐܙܠ ܐܢܐ ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܒܬܪܟ ܐܙܠ ܘܐܬܐ ܠܟ ܠܐ ܢܫܒܩ ܠܟ ܘܠܐ ܢܫܒܩ ܠܟ ܠܥܠܡ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܠܐ ܐܫܒܩܟ ܘܠܐ ܐܥܙܒܟ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܟܐܦܐ ܒܪ ܝܘܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܦ ܐܢܬ ܐܝܟ ܐܠܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܐܢܬ

And to confirm their shame, they sent for a man from Bēth Kusāyē[142] whose name was ʿAwira. For from early on, he, too, had been educated in this error of Magism among his family and kin. Many afflictions befell him because of his faith in Christ, but he did not slacken. His wealth and possessions were taken from him but he was supported by some of the believers. They summoned him to Maḥozē of Bēth Aramāyē and dealt him bitter blows, but he did not slacken. They spoke to[143] the *rozban*, that is, the executioner, so that he might frighten him.[144] The executioner then drew a mark on his neck. The confessor immediately extended his neck before the sword while he rejoiced,[145] gave thanks, exulted, and praised God. He said to the executioner:

– "Kill me and my joy and my wish will be fulfilled, for I have long waited to die for Christ. This is the hope that I have waited upon from my childhood up until this very moment."

When they saw the willingness and promptness of this man, all of them were stunned and became silent. They motioned to that executioner not to kill him, but to sever parts of his earlobes and nostrils.[146] This, which was done, was so that the name of this confessor might not be forgotten from among the number of his companion holy martyrs; rather he might have this testimony before everyone.

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[142] This region is situated to the northeast of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the capital.

[143] Here we prefer Ms. B.

[144] The word for "executioner" is a Middle Persian loanword, *rwzpʾng* (C. Ciancaglini, *Iranian Loanwords in Syriac* [Beiträgezur Iranistik 28; Wiesbaden, 2008], 254).

[145] Again we follow Ms. B.

[146] This torment resembles that of the "nine deaths," here in an abbreviated form: the executioner severed the limbs one by one, at each joint, starting with the toes and finishing with the ears, nose, and head. Cf. C. Jullien, "Peines et supplices dans les *Actes des martyrs persans* et droit sassanide: nouvelles prospections," *Studia Iranica* 33/2 (2004), 262–63. See above *Martyrdom of Mār Grigor*, n. 175.

ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܡܪܝ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܬ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܟ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܒܥܠ ܚܝܠ ܠܡܥܒܕ ܥܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܪܥܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܫܬܘܕܐ ܠܐܠܗ ܐܚܪܢܝ ܐܠܐ ܠܗ ܒܠܚܘܕܘܗܝ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܒܗܬܟ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܘܝܨܚܩ ܘܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܢܬ

The virtuous wish of the one who was not even killed is acceptable before God in his life as though it were in his death.

Conclusion

13 These wonders occurred and were performed in those days for the sake of the economy[153] of our Lord Jesus Christ. The believers showed such love for the religion of God.[154] Glory to Him,* and may His mercy and favor be upon us for ever and ever. Amen!

[153] The economy (cf. Gr. *οἰκονομία*) of salvation refers to God's creation and management of the world and to his plan for the salvation of mankind throughout history, which is accomplished by Jesus and through the Church.

[154] Ms. B adds: "while the faith was strengthened, growing every day, impiousness was diminished, constantly lessened. The temples of their demons were destroyed and completely ruined by the power of Christ our Lord."

ܘܐܬܝܗܒ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܟ ܚܝܠ ܘܢܨܚ ܒܟ ܟܠ ܡܠܟ ܕܐܪܥ ܘܫܡܝܐ ܐܡܝܢ ܘܐܡܝܢ.

13 ܒܗܕܐ ܙܒܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܫܘܥ ܒܫܒܚܐ ܠܐܒܘܗܝ ܘܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܢܫܬܒܚ ܒܫܡܝ ܐܠܐ ܒܫܡ ܚܕ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܚܝܠ ܘܫܘܠܛܢ ܘܟܒܘܕ ܘܫܘܒܚܐ ܘܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ ܥܠܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ. ܘܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܕܚܙܝܬ ܘܫܡܥܬ ܠܗ ܠܗ ܠܡܪܝ ܐܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܒܟܬܒ ܒܣܦܪܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܬܫܒܚ ܒܗ ܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܢܟܬܘܒ ܘܢܩܪܐ ܒܗ ܒܟܢܝܫܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܕܫܡܗ ܩܕܝܫ ܒܫܡ ܟܠ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܒ

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